



Egyptian women demonstrate in front of the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on Wednesday in protest against the construction by Israel of a new settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. The women shouted anti-Israeli slogans and called for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador in Cairo (AFP photo)

Kinkel rejects Turkish attack on EU members

ANKARA (AFP) — On a visit to Ankara, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Wednesday Europeans had no intention of "hanging their heads" over European Union (EU) policy to Turkey, rejecting criticism by Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

"No European, and certainly not Mr. Kinkel, will hang his head," Mr. Kinkel said at a press briefing ahead of a meeting with the premier.

He also criticised what he called Mr. Erbakan's "megaphone diplomacy."

Born intended to use the two-day visit to promote some quiet discussion of Turkey's ambitions to join the European Union. These hopes evaporated Tuesday.

Turkish media reported Mr. Erbakan was telling a press conference on Tuesday that the German official would have to "hang his head" over Europe's reluctance to admit Turkey to membership of the EU.

A recording of Mr. Erbakan's remarks at a meeting of his pro-Islamic party in Ankara broadcast by Turkish television showed that he had said the Europeans in general should hang their heads, because "Europe has not kept its promises to Turkey."

Mr. Erbakan warned that Mr. Kinkel would realise this during his visit.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry later issued a statement saying that the remarks attributed to Mr. Erbakan did not reflect correctly what he had said.

The prime minister had "drawn attention to the understanding of the European Union concerning its relations with

Turkey," the statement said.

Mr. Kinkel — in Rome for a celebratory meeting of EU foreign ministers Tuesday — delayed his arrival in Turkey by two and a half hours Tuesday while the comments were verified, and only agreed to go forward with the visit after the foreign ministry statement was issued.

Relations between Turkey and the 15-member body have been strained recently by the reluctance of some EU members to accept Turkey as a member.

Europe and Turkey have agreed to form a customs union but this has fallen short of Ankara's expectations.

"Europe has not kept its promise concerning the customs union. It has not given Turkey the right to move freely (in Europe) and it has not awarded Turkey the grants," foreseen in the signing of the customs union deal, Mr. Erbakan said Tuesday.

The United States for its part is particularly keen that Europe should not cold-shoulder Turkey — criticised by some countries for its poor human rights record — considering its key strategic position between Europe and Asia and its role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

But Germany in particular is reluctant to speed Turkey's closer integration into Europe.

Kinkel said that the EU had "made every effort" over the customs union but added that he was "not a magician."

He reiterated the German position that "Turkey belongs to Europe" but EU membership was "impossible in the near future."

Israel says attacks foiled; Shin Bet powers boosted

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's secret service has foiled several attempted Palestinian attacks in recent days, a senior official has said, calling on the Israeli public to remain vigilant for further violence.

General Meir Dagan, adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said a suicide bombing by a Hamas militant Friday which killed three Israelis and wounded more than 40 in Tel Aviv was only one of a number of planned actions against the Jewish state.

And he accused the Palestinian self-rule government of Yasser Arafat of inciting rather than countering the violence to put pressure on Israel to back down on recent policy decisions, notably to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

"We have seen no noticeable change in the attitude of the part of the Palestinian National Authority concerning its battle against terrorism and we call on the public to be vigilant, keep your eyes open, the danger is out there," he told a press conference.

The Israeli secret service has foiled several attempted terrorist attacks in the past few days, but there may be others we don't know about," he said.

In a separate move, Israel's Channel Two television reported Tuesday that the internal security agency Shin Bet had been given new powers to carry out missions in Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Channel Two said special funds had been freed up since

the suicide bombing to fund Shin Bet operations in the Palestinian territories because of the Palestinian security forces' refusal to cooperate with their Israeli counterparts against the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad.

Shin Bet spearheads counter-espionage and the fight against terrorism, and played a major role in quelling the 1987-1993 intifada in the Palestinian territories through a network of collaborators.

It has an annual budget of \$150 million and is answerable directly to the prime minister, but the Israeli army's withdrawal from part of the Palestinian territories together with the resetting of many informants in Israel has blunted its effectiveness in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Gen. Dagan also expressed concern that Palestinian movements like Hamas, which claimed responsibility for Friday's bombing, and Arafat's Fatah Party could seek to foment unrest next week when Israel's Arab minority marks "Land Day."

Israeli Arabs commemorate land day each March 30 to honour six Arabs killed by Israeli police in 1976 during protests against government seizures of Arab land in the Galilee region of northern Israel.

"The Palestinian National Authority, Fateh and Hamas might try to use their influence to spur unrest during Land Day," Gen. Dagan said. "It's very worrisome," he added.

Palestinian and Israeli panelists agree Netanyahu undermining peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — Following an unprecedented interview with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday night, Emadeddin Adee, host of the nightly talk show Ala Al Hawa, broadcast on Orbit satellite television and radio network, met with some of the region's top experts from both the Palestinian and Israeli sides to evaluate the Oslo agreement and its effect on the current critical state of the peace process.

Representing the Palestinian side in the discussion were Ahmad Qouria, chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Nabil Abu Zunaid, professor of political science at Hebron University, and Saleh Tareef, a Labour member of the Knesset. Serving as Israeli representatives were Ephraim Sneh, former Israeli health minister and Meyer Cohen, an Israeli television journalist.

Focusing on the Oslo agreement, the panelists unveiled their thoughts on the future of the peace process as it now stands following Mr. Netanyahu's decision to continue with construction of a Jewish settlement in Jabal Abu Ghnein, in Arab East Jerusalem, a decision which has sparked criticism, unrest and violence.

Mr. Qouria, who participated in the Oslo peace negotiations, stressed that the original text of the Oslo agreement does not permit Mr. Netanyahu to continue building settlements. Emphasising that the agreement was clearly written, he added that the Oslo agreement "prevented both sides from taking any action that would undermine the right of the other party in the negotiations."

Later on in the telecast, Mr. Qouria blamed Mr. Netanyahu, for the present crisis, accusing him of "trying to rewrite the Oslo agreement with bulldozers" and removing the question

of settlements from the Oslo formula, therefore transforming Jerusalem into a Jewish city.

Mr. Tareef also offered criticism of the Israeli leader, refuting Mr. Netanyahu's claims that he is building residential units for both Arabs and Israelis, stating, "The Jabal Abu Ghnein settlement is being built on Palestinian land to house Jews."

Professor Abu Zunaid expressed his belief that the Oslo agreement is dying adding, "the only way it can be saved is by a surgical operation."

Representing the Israeli point of view was Mr. Sneh, a main candidate for the leadership of the Labour Party. He stressed that the current Israeli government is unable to move forward with the peace process due to the opposition of a large number of its supporters.

Mr. Sneh indicated that his party is prepared to participate in a coalition government under Mr. Netanyahu to prevent the current situation from deteriorating further, "providing Netanyahu is serious about solving the present crisis."

Mr. Sneh said: "Netanyahu suffers from a basic contradiction between his beliefs and his political responsibilities which explains why he keeps changing his views and positions."

Asked about the differences between the views of the two main Israeli parties regarding the future Palestinian entity, Mr. Sneh commented that the Labour Party supports a sovereign Palestinian entity alongside Israel.

Both Palestinian and Israeli panelists agreed on Ala Al Hawa that unless the two parties return to the negotiation table and tangible progress is made towards peace, the region is probably witnessing the beginning of a third Palestinian intifada.



SIT-IN AGAINST SANCTIONS: Members of U.S. humanitarian group 'Voices in the Wilderness,' carrying pictures of sick Iraqi children, stage a sit-in Wednesday in front of U.N. headquarters in Amman. The group, which recently visited Baghdad, said that they publicly broke the U.N. sanctions by taking medical supplies to Iraq. It was the fourth time members of the group challenged the sanctions as well as an official U.S. ban on American nationals travelling to Iraq (AFP photo)

Saudi Arabia pledges to continue UNRWA support

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has pledged to continue its financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees, said UNRWA's Commissioner General Peter Hansen here Tuesday.

"The Saudi officials that I met promised me the kingdom's support for UNRWA," said Mr. Hansen at a press conference, adding that Saudi Arabia currently contributes \$1.2 million a year to the agency.

Mr. Hansen said that Saudi Arabia had contributed \$30 million to UNRWA since the

signing of the Oslo peace accords in 1993. UNRWA provides education as well as social and health services for more than three million Palestinian refugees who are living in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Syria and Lebanon.

Mr. Hansen has already visited Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain as part of a Gulf tour aimed at forging a dialogue between UNRWA and the donor countries about the organisation's priorities and to discuss a funding shortfall.

Sudan expects talks to resume with Egypt

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan and Egypt are set to resume talks aimed at mending fences between the two neighbouring countries, a senior Sudanese foreign ministry official told Akhbar Al Yom newspaper on Wednesday.

The foreign ministries in Khartoum and Cairo "have begun arrangements for resolving the disputes" between the countries, state Foreign Minister Jebri Rorec told the newspaper.

Mr. Rorec added that a joint Sudanese-Egyptian ministerial committee set up in 1993 to discuss their differences, which include a dispute over control of the

Halaib border region, would resume "in the near future."

Egyptian-Sudanese relations, already tense, worsened after Egypt accused Sudan of involvement in a bid to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995.

"The Sudanese and Egyptian people are inseparable despite the Egyptian position regarding what is currently going on in Sudan as an internal affair," Mr. Rorec said.

Sudan has appealed for Egyptian and Arab support against an offensive launched by Sudanese opposition forces in Janu-

ary to topple the government in Khartoum, charging that Uganda and Ethiopia were supporting the rebels.

But Cairo has ruled out any foreign intervention in Sudan, saying the matter was an "internal" problem.

Mr. Rorec said his government had approached Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi to try to mend fences between Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Eritrea and had also appealed to South African President Nelson Mandela to help resolve the armed conflict on its eastern border.

Knesset moves against killer's memorial

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli parliament on Tuesday took the first step towards banning a monument dedicated to a Jewish fanatic who gunned down 29 Palestinians in 1994, parliamentary sources said.

Legislation put forward by left-wing Meretz Party Deputy Ran Cohen makes it illegal to put up a monument commemorating the instigators of terrorist attacks. The text of the law, which was approved in a first reading by the parliament, is aimed at a monument in memory of Baruch Goldstein in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba near Hebron.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Divide & the Gang
14:30 Raw Town
14:45 Custody Show
15:10 They Came From Outer Space
16:00 N.R.A. Basketball
17:00 Out of This World
17:30 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Parenthood
20:00 Cinema: Cinema
20:30 The American Chart Show
21:10 Kung Fu: The Legend
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature Film: Between the Darkness and the Dawn
23:50 Tarantula

PRAYER TIMES

04:08 Fajr
05:26 (Sunrise) Duha
11:41 Dhuh
15:11 Asr
17:56 Maghreb
19:14 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifleh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 622385
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church

Tel. 771751

Amman International Church

Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints

Tel. 653932

Church of Nazareth

Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811245

English-speaking

Latin Catholic Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Sharp rise in temperatures is expected today with humidity dipping. It will be warm, dry, and dusty. Scattered showers are expected in the evening and winds becoming southeasterly moderate to active. On Friday, temperatures will drop, winds southwesterly moderate to active, with a chance of scattered showers. In Agaba, it will be warm and dusty, winds southerly active and seas rough.

Mini-Max, Temperatures

Amman 04/18

Agaba 09/25

Deserts 02/20

Jordan Valley 08/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 13, Agaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 51 per cent, Agaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Jhali 740740

Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485

Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301

Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 758848

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080

Al Quds pharmacy 1

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaseh 982799

Khalifeh pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police

896390

Public Security Department

630321

Hotel Complaints

605800

Price Complaints

661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints

897467

Amman Municipality Complaints

787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)

121

Overseas Calls

010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs

623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television

773111

Radio Jordan

774111

Water Authority

680100

Jordan Electricity Authority

815615

Electric Power Company

636381

RJ Flight Information

08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport

08-53200

University Hospital

845845

Al-Muasher Hospital

667279

The Islamic, Abdali

666126/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali

664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen

777101/3

Al-Bashir

775111/26

Army, Marka

891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital

602240/50

Amal Hospital

674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery

865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

(09)833323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital

(09)86732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

(02)272775

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital

(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

(03)814111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) informa-

tion department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

U.N. denies permission for flights between Amman and Baghdad

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The U.N. Sanctions Committee has again turned down a Jordanian request for permission to operate Royal Jordanian (RJ) flights between Amman and Baghdad, but officials said the government would continue to file requests.

Officials remained hopeful that the United Nations Sanctions Committee would eventually allow RJ to operate weekly flights between Amman and Baghdad despite the negative decision on Monday by the panel to give blanket advance approval for such flights.

Jordan has been filing periodic requests for permission to operate Baghdad flights on humanitarian grounds. The requests became particularly relevant with the implementation of Baghdad's oil-for-food agreement with the United Nations which would bring about a regular flow of United Nations officials in and out of Iraq.

The six-year old United

Nations sanctions against Iraq include a ban on civil aviation between Iraq and the outside world. Iraq's only official outlet is the 1,000-kilometre overland route that runs through Jordan.

The officials noted that the decision by the Sanctions Committee was that it would consider allowing Amman-Baghdad flights upon specific requests based on humanitarian grounds as well as for U.N. purposes.

According to the officials, the Jordanian request to the Sanctions Committee said the flights would be used to carry U.N. observers and other staff as well as pilgrims to holy sites to and from Iraq.

The U.N. Sanctions Committee declined to give blanket advance approval to the request.

The U.N. imposed the sweeping sanctions on Iraq in August 1990 following that country's invasion of Kuwait. All air flights between Iraq and the outside world were halted immediately, but Iraqi Airways continued to operate a

daily flight to Amman until Jan. 15, one day before a U.S.-led coalition launched a successful offensive to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait.

Jordan has been trying since then to get approval for a limited number of flights to and from Baghdad.

Iraq had also filed requests to the Sanctions Committee for approval for flights by Iraqi Airways, but these have been turned down.

Jordanian exporters meanwhile started executing export orders to Iraq under the oil-for-food deal following approval given to 10 companies. The approved orders, from among nearly 50 sent to the Sanctions Committee from Jordan, are worth \$26 million; the rest, still unapproved, are worth around \$95 million.

The items covered include detergents, cooking oil and salt.

The first trucks carrying salt to Iraq from Jordan arrived in Baghdad on Tuesday, reports from the Iraqi capital said.

Prime minister discusses private sector role

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday reaffirmed the new government's support for the private sector in building up the national economy and addressing obstacles impeding trade exchanges and exports.

In a conference with Chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce Haidar Murad as well as chamber board members who called to congratulate the prime minister on the formation of the new government, Dr. Majali affirmed that his government would accelerate the process of approving legislation which aims at stimulating the national economy and attracting foreign investors to the Kingdom.

Dr. Majali also stated that his government would do everything possible to promote Jordanian trade with other Arab nations and take steps to ensure the marketing of national products in the Arab World and beyond.

He urged private sector institutions to adopt a decentralisation policy and launch economic and trade projects in different governorates. The prime minister also pledged to lessen bureaucracy in government administration services.

Mr. Murad requested that the government allow pilgrims passing through Jordan on their way to and back from Mecca to shop in Jordan and visit holy sites in the Kingdom.

He stated that such a move would stimulate commercial activity in Jordan. Dr. Murad agreed to his request.

At the meeting, Mr. Murad pledged that the private sector would back government plans in addressing unemployment.

Prime minister meets with Bosnian general

Also Wednesday, Dr. Majali received General Rasim Dilic, commander of the Bosnian army, and the



Subsequent to a meeting with the chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali meets with General of the Bosnian Armed Forces Rasim Dilic to discuss military issues (Petra photo)

two reviewed regional and international affairs.

Gen. Dilic paid tribute to the role of the Jordan Armed Forces within UN

peace keeping forces in Bosnia.

The general later met the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordan Armed Forces Marshal

Abdul Hafez Marie Kaabneh and the two reviewed military issues and bilateral relations.

American students participate in exchange programme with Jordan

Zeina Durra

Special to the Jordan Times

ON MARCH 22, a group of ninth and eleventh grade American students arrived in Amman as part of an exchange programme organised by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NAHF).

The majority of the students participating in the programme are from the 'Jubilee School' in Amman and the North Atlanta High School in Atlanta, Georgia.

Their impressions so far appear to be very positive.

"The hospitality here is overwhelming," one student said. "They take you in as one of their own."

Arab cuisine also seemed to be a favourite. "The food is delicious, especially the falafel," another said.

At the same time, the students also seem to have realised that Jordan "isn't all marble and falafel," as one explained. They are aware of the poverty levels and passing through Baqa'a, the Palestinian refugee camp on the road to Jerash, was one of the examples given.

When asked whether their expectations of Jordan differed from their actual experiences, the students said, "We realised that Jordan wasn't all desert, camels and warring factions as we have been educated. But sadly many Americans hold this prejudiced view."

One girl mentioned that she thought people here would be more religious and another pupil recounted a story which reflected his

surprise when two girls in hijab pulled a prank as, he stated, he would have never expected someone so overtly religious to exhibit such zest for life.

Another student was struck by the rocky terrain as he had thought that agriculture was a main contributor towards the country's economy.

They unanimously agreed that the general living standards in Amman equalled those in the United States "except that there isn't always hot water."

The pupils of the North Atlanta High School boast a variety of backgrounds and are taught in an original manner in which the promotion of understanding other cultures is stressed.

They have the opportunity to learn Arabic, which nine out of the eleven visiting students study as well as other Oriental languages. They also participate in multicultural lessons which heighten their adaptation to other ways of life.

Evidence of this is seen in the students' broadened views. "All the news we receive has a biased slant, so it's good to get the other side," one student said. "That's why I came."

The Jubilee School is managed along much the same lines.

It too recruits students from diverse backgrounds and teaches in an original manner in which students are encouraged to question their teachers.

As one exchange student said, "It's very democratic."

The American students' teacher, Mr. R. Hornsby

said, "Our schools could learn a lot from [this method of instruction]."

When asked if the students were afraid to visit Jordan in light of the incident in the north in which Israeli schoolchildren were assaulted earlier this month, one replied, "This type of incident happens all the time back home. If I were to be scared of things like this I'd never leave my house!"

The students visited the Royal Palace and met with HRH Prince Ghazi to whom they took an immediate liking.

"We were all really nervous about meeting him but in walked this really chilled-out guy," one student enthused.

When the Prince inquired as to their impressions of Jordanian youth, the consensus was that they are quite similar to American youth.

To this Prince Ghazi replied that people are the same everywhere and that they have the same needs, ambitions, fears and wants.

The students will continue their tour of Jordan with visits to Madaba, Petra and Jerash.

"This is the first of many exchanges," said Dr. Mary Zumot, exchange coordinator for the American side. "Next time it will hopefully be for a more extended period."

The Jordanian students are scheduled to visit Atlanta in autumn of this year.

Arab nations to discuss health insurance

CAIRO (Petra) — Representatives of Arab nations' health ministers will hold a meeting in Amman in June to discuss health insurance in the Arab World. Minister of Health Ashraf Kurdi announced Wednesday.

Dr. Kurdi, currently leading Jordan's delegation to the Arab Health Ministers meeting at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, said that the decision was taken at the start of a two-day meeting during which the

ministers also decided to create a higher council on medicine to support Arab pharmaceutical industries.

The ministers have reviewed pan-Arab efforts to combat drugs, a pan-Arab plan for child care and unifying Arab countries' health legislation, he added.

In their two-day meeting, the Arab ministers will also discuss a pan-Arab strategy regarding health development and other topics including the general health

condition of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories.

Dr. Kurdi said that the ministers have examined a request by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) as well as matters connected with the implementation of a pan-Arab health cooperation agreement and cooperation with world organisations in dealing with health-related issues.

Jordan to observe World Health Day

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will observe World Health Day on Apr. 7, under the theme of fighting contagious diseases, as directed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and has prepared a series of public awareness programmes to spread health consciousness in the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Health released a statement delineating a joint public and private sector committee

whose members are involved in public health, combating infectious diseases and programmes of seminars, lectures in schools, universities and youth and sports centres as well as the distribution of leaflets and posters.

The health awareness campaign will also be carried out with the help of mosque preachers and charitable and voluntary societies, the ministry stated.

The Ministry of Health, in conjunction with WHO, will organise a media campaign through radio, television and the press and will organise a volleyball match in cooperation with the ministries of youth and higher education in which participants will don sportswear with the WHO logo to promote health awareness.

The campaign will be implemented in different governorates.

A WHO memorandum, issued in observance of World Health Day, stated that despite major successes in combating contagious diseases, outbreaks of malaria and tuberculosis are "making a comeback" while tetanus, diphtheria, meningitis and cholera are reappearing on occasional bases.

WHO Regional Director for the Near East Dr. Hussein Abdul Razaq Jazairi

noted that contagious diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) have been on the increase. AIDS has heretofore killed six million people.

Dr. Jazairi noted that WHO has implemented an integrated strategy to help nations combat diseases through immunisation campaigns, health education and prompt responses to outbreaks.

German 'high-level' group to be briefed on Jordanian society, politics and economy

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a bid to acquire both a more comprehensive understanding and an authentic detailed analysis of culture, economy and the political scene in Jordan, a high-level group from the public and private sectors in Germany Wednesday arrived in the Kingdom.

The Tönnieskreis, a group of people who represent the industrial and political sectors of Germany, are on an information tour in order to experience more

than just the "folkloric aspect" of the Kingdom, according to Manfred Haack, representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FEF) in Amman.

The FEF, which is responsible for organising an information seminar to provide the group with "comprehensive and well-founded current and future prospects in Jordan," convened this seminar, according to Mr. Haack.

The seminar is slated to provide the group, some of whom are members in the federal government as well as representatives of lead-

ing German industries, with information about the situation in Jordan in view of a merging Jordanian-European partnership agreement.

"The high-level group will not only be educated about Jordan, they will carry the Jordanian message back to Germany," Mr. Haack stated. "There they will convey it to other influential people."

The 58-member German group includes Dr. Klaus-Dieter von Horn, a director from the Federal Ministry of Economics in Bonn. Dr. Knut Kage, a director from

the Federal Ministry of Finance in Bonn. Mr. Joachim Kraplin, secretary general from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Düsseldorf. Dr. Martin Seidel, ministerial adviser of the Federal Ministry of Economics in Bonn. Dr. Wolfram Rohde-Liebenau, director of Siemens AG in Munich.

Addressing the group in today's seminar, are: Dr. Sari Nasser, sociologist at the University of Jordan, who will discuss the social structure of Jordan; Dr. Elias Salameh, water expert at the University of Jordan

who will address the water situation; Dr. Mustafa Humamneh, director of the Centre of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan who will focus on the democratisation process; and Dr. Taleb Rifal, director of the Investment Promotion Corporation who will explain structural obstacles in relation to the Jordanian economy.

The Tönnieskreis group, established in the 1950s, promotes international relations and representation of Germany and Germans abroad.

What's Going On

FILM

* "Edgar Degas: The Unquiet Spirit" (with commentary in Arabic by Adnan Al Sharif) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

FOURTH AMMAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Jordanian play: "We Loved Each Other" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:30 p.m. (Festival opening on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.)

* French play: "Entrée dans le théâtre des oreilles" by La Compagnie de l'Émergence at the Royal Cultural Centre on Friday at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Artworks by Egyptian artist Jamil Sbaq entitled "Black and White" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until April 10. (The artist will be at Baladna Gallery on Saturday March 29 to sign limited copies of prints of his work.)

* Display of products by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Saqra (Tel. 699141/2), until March 30.

DAY THREE

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS RANIA AL-ABDULLAH

JORDAN RIVER FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Is organizing a fund raising campaign:-

Cloths, toys, books, non-perishable foods, monetary contributions and anything that will put a smile on a child's face will be collected

From March 25 until April 3, 1997
Between 8:00am - 7:00pm

Donated gifts could be sent to one of the following locations:-
Jordan River Designs showroom (See map), Al Abila Abela - McDonald's (Mecca St.) - Iman Early Learning Center (Abdoun) - Safeway - Fakherdin Restaurant - Aramex (Mecca St./Infront of Dahiya Al Hussien)

Or you can deposit your contribution to:-
A special Jordan River For Development Projects' bank account number 48/50493/20 At The Arab Jordan Investment Bank

Following, allocated funds will be distributed all over the kingdom between April 6 until April 15, 1997
 An account of what is contributed will appear daily in local newspapers

We hope you will join us in making this Eid one to remember for our needy children, even if it means a sacrifice.

For further information call 613081 or Fax 613083

Notes:
 - Items should be clean and in a good condition
 - When sending a parcel, kindly attach a brief description with a recommended age or size.

Jordan Times facsimile
696 183

West Afghanistan fighting marks crucial stage in factional tussle

KABUL (AFP) — Intensified fighting in Afghanistan's western Badkhis province marks a crucial stage in the war between the Taleban Islamic militia and its opponents, analysts said.

Badkhis opens the door to Herat, and if the anti-Taleban alliance can capture Herat, the road is open all the way to Kandahar, the Taleban base in southwest Afghanistan, they said.

They said that if the Taleban were seriously challenged on their home turf, the religious militia garrisoned in Kabul and the frontlines further north, would be obliged to pull back to defend Kandahar.

Fighting in Badkhis has heated up and the ethnic Uzbek opposition forces led by northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum have reportedly pushed the Taleban back to the provincial capital of Qala-i-Naw.

Reports from the Badkhis frontlines are scanty and difficult to verify, but the consensus of sources is that Gen. Dostum's fighters

have captured the Taleban outposts of Mangan, Buz-boy, Pul-i-Khanna and probably also Darra-i-Boon on the northern defensive perimeter of Qala-i-Naw.

Reports that the strategic heights called Sang-i-Atesh, less than 10 kilometres east of Qala-i-Naw, have been captured by Gen. Dostum troops might be premature, but the provincial capital is clearly under threat, they added.

The official Taleban press spokesman in Kabul Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi has repeatedly told journalists that claims of military advances by Gen. Dostum in Badkhis were "baseless."

Nevertheless Mr. Muttaqi admitted 800 Taleban reinforcements have been flown from Kabul to Herat, from where they were trucked or helicoptered to Qala-i-Naw, a city which civilians have largely deserted.

"In the past month around 2,000 Afghan families have evacuated Qala-i-Naw and withdrawn to Herat city," Western aid workers said.

Gen. Dostum's ally Ismael Khan, the former governor of Herat who was driven out by the Taleban in September 1995, has been seen in Badkhis in command of his resurrected ethnic Tajik forces.

Ismael Khan's men are said to have been helicoptered from their sanctuary near Mashad in eastern Iran, to the Badkhis district centre of Morghab, 104 kilometres to the north of Qala-i-Naw.

Information about an advance by Ismael Khan from Morghab via Mangan towards the Taleban-controlled border station of Torghundi in neighbouring Herat province is sketchy, but logical.

The terrain there is rugged and desolate, the road merely a track, but locals who have travelled the area to harvest the wild growing pistachio forests, say the route would be passable by trucks and tanks.

It is not clear whether the strategy of Gen. Dostum and Ismael Khan is merely to contain a large force of Taleban in Qala-i-Naw and

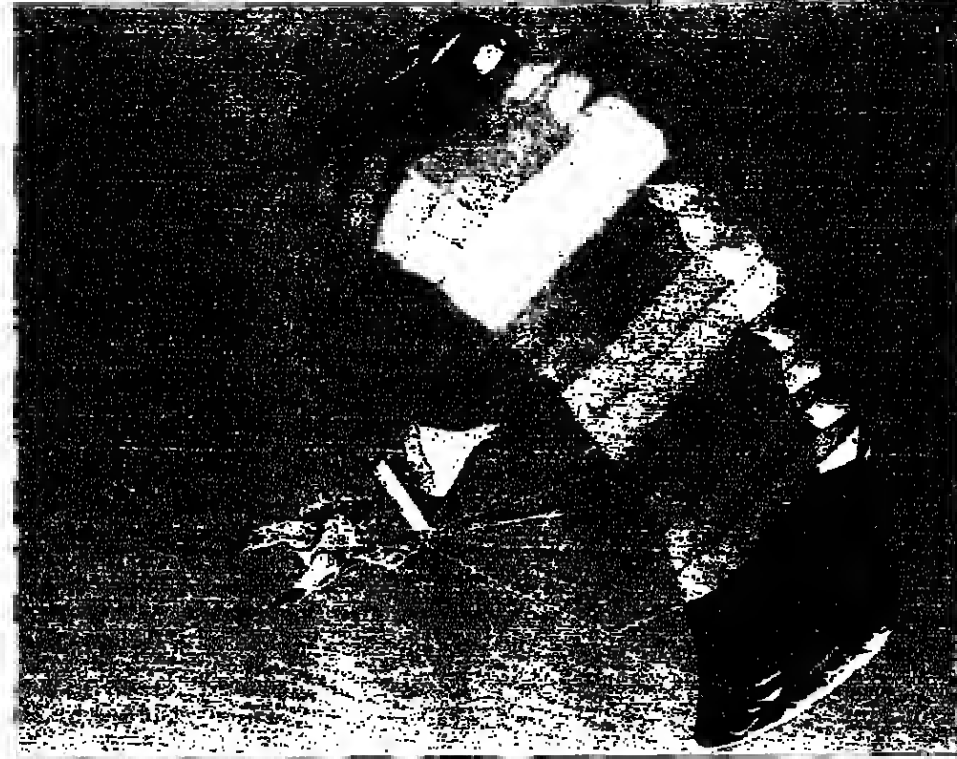
thereby take the military pressure off their eastern Afghanistan fronts, or if they plan to advance and try to seize Qala-i-Naw and Herat.

If Herat is the potential prize, analysts say Qala-i-Naw could even be bypassed by using the Torghandi Road, a tactic — if successful — which would oblige the Taleban to evacuate Badkhis or risk being cut-off.

Herat is of great importance. In addition to its strategic airport, arsenal and immensely lucrative customs revenue from cross-border traders, it opens the way to the Taleban heartland of Kandahar, 565 kilometres to the southeast.

This route is well-known and already tried by Ismael Khan: he suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Taleban here two years ago.

"The question now, is whether Ismael Khan with or without Gen. Dostum's help wants to give it another go," one analyst said.



Former President George Bush, 72, makes an accelerated free fall jump from approximately 12,500 feet using a civilian sport parachute at the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Tuesday (Reuter photo)

Bush fulfills pledge with jump over Arizona desert

YUMA PROVING GROUND, Arizona (R) — Former President George Bush parachuted out of an airplane over the Arizona desert Tuesday, fulfilling his promise to himself after being out of his crippled World War navy bomber.

Mr. Bush jumped with eight others including members of the U.S. parachute association and the army's Golden Knights parachute team. Linked by a harness to a pair of expert jumpmasters, the 72-year-old former chief executive stepped out of the civilian airplane and sailed into a cloudless sky about 3,800 metres over the army's Yuma Proving Ground.

He deployed an orange, yellow and blue parachute at about 1,370 metres, the harness was released and he glided solo to the desert floor, touching down safely on a warm, breezy day.

Asked how he felt after his first parachute jump since bailing out over the Pacific Ocean during the war, Mr. Bush gave onlookers the thumbs-up signal. "Like that," said Mr. Bush, decked out in a red, white and blue jumpsuit.

President Bill Clinton, speaking at a White House event before Mr. Bush made his jump, said: "I am mightily impressed," he added, "I can't wait to see him get down and give us the story."

Mr. Bush was met on the ground by his wife Barbara and half a dozen people who rushed to meet him. A crowd of about 50 people watched the jump at the Military Proving Ground, including an emergency crew on hand in case of a misjump.

Mr. Bush last jumped from an airplane in September 1944 when his torpedo bomber was shot down on a

strafing run over an island in the Pacific Ocean about 965 kilometres south of Japan. With his plane on fire and severely damaged by anti-aircraft fire, he flew out over the ocean before he bailed out and was rescued by a navy submarine. His two crewmen were killed.

Mr. Bush renewed his pledge to make a parachute jump at a recent meeting of the U.S. Parachute Association where he was given a vintage World War II parachute. He and Barbara, who gave her blessing to the jump, arrived Monday in Yuma, where the former president got eight hours of training with parachute experts.

The landing site is used by the Golden Knights precision skydiving team for training and is part of the Proving Ground used by the army to test equipment and weapons systems.

French defence minister admits NATO command impasse with U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — French Defence Minister Charles Millon indicated Tuesday there had been no progress in talks with his U.S. counterpart on shared leadership of the NATO southern command.

"To tell you today that we are in agreement would be wrong," Mr. Millon told a press conference, saying, however, that he had insisted to U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen on an "equitable" division of NATO responsibilities.

Mr. Millon, who arrived here Monday, met at the Pentagon with Mr. Cohen Tuesday on a range of NATO issues, including the U.S.-French dispute over who should lead the Naples-based southern command.

Before his three-hour talks with Mr. Cohen, Mr. Millon told reporters: "It seems evident to U.S. that to have a strengthened trans-Atlantic link, to have a true trans-Atlantic renewal, it would be convenient to move toward a parity of responsibility."

France has proposed sharing the key regional command, but Washington insists that it remain under a U.S. commander for at least a period of five to seven years when the issue would be reviewed again.

The dispute threatens to halt France's return to NATO's military structure. The meeting between the two defence ministers came as France and the United States jointly try to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Zaire, which has caused both countries to send troops to the region to protect their citizens.

Mr. Millon said that he does "not foresee an international force" in the central African country.

"Mr. Cohen and I reaffirmed our commitment to unity in Zaire and the re-establishment of civil peace, and we agreed that if the establishment of civil peace requires a government of national union, we would favour a government of national union and work on diplomatic initiatives towards this goal," Mr. Millon said.

Mr. Millon said earlier U.S. and French diplomats were trying to get Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila to agree on a government that is backed by the people.

Mr. Millon, who met Mr. Cohen for the first time Monday night at dinner, reiterated that France will withdraw its troops from Bosnia when U.S. forces depart in June 1998 when the mandate of current 31,000-strong NATO-led Stabilisation Force runs out.

With only 16 months to go, Mr. Cohen is pressing the Europeans to get the civilian aspects of the Bosnian peace accords moving. Municipal elections were postponed, resettlement of refugees has stalled, funding for economic reconstruction has lagged, and the international police force is inadequate to the task of keeping order.

Among the first suggestions were either to build a brand new headquarters on the actual premises or to relocate to Bonn after the German government administration transfers to Berlin.

King Albert II has already told the alliance council that Belgium would spare no effort "to secure the good functioning of the alliance into the 21st century."

There are several arguments favouring the Belgian option.

It would consist of destroying the current buildings, which were never meant to be fixtures, on the 30-hectare (75-acre) site and making better use of extensive parking facilities.

Also the location of the NATO building in Brussels facilitates relations with the European Union and the Western European Union, both of whose headquarters are also in Brussels, a diplomat said.

Above all, it is only 15 minutes away by helicopter from NATO's military base at Mons in the south of the country.

It remains to be seen whether building new headquarters in Brussels would be more expensive than transferring to Bonn, an alternative which Germany has not officially offered so far.

In diplomatic terms, Bonn might not be the best choice with regards to Russia, who does not want to have the alliance infrastructure come too close to its borders, another NATO official said.

The final decision, which will require a consensus among the 16 members of the alliance, could be taken in June, diplomats said.

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NATO is considering new HQ

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO is considering changing headquarters because the building it has occupied for the past 30 years in Brussels is too small and rundown, diplomats said Wednesday.

The concrete is crumbling, cracks are hidden by wallpaper and the new buildings that have been set up for the staff of the partnership for peace military cooperation programme are just prefabricated cubicles," a NATO official said.

NATO's plan to start opening its doors to East European countries at its Madrid summit in July makes the issue all the more pressing as extra space will be needed to accommodate the expanded membership.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana recently asked the 16 current members of the organisation to give their views on the future of the alliance headquarters, the diplomats said.

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Sen. Helms Chemical pact possible

WINGATE, North Carolina (R) — In a major shift, key U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms said Tuesday he was negotiating with the Clinton administration over the landmark chemical weapons treaty and that ratification of the pact by the Senate was now within reach.

"If both sides will sit down (and negotiate) and be realistic about it, there's a very good chance there could be a treaty," said Sen. Helms, the influential Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who has blocked Senate action on the treaty for months.

He said he would hold another committee hearing on the treaty in two weeks after Congress returns to work from the Easter recess.

He made his comments at a news conference with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who has spent months wooing the senator in her campaign to bring bipartisanship back to U.S. foreign policy.

For the second time in a year, Mr. Albright spent the day with Sen. Helms in his home state of North Carolina, talking about foreign policy with community leaders, businessmen and students.

Until now, Sen. Helms and his aides had focused publicly mainly on his strong opposition to the treaty.

On Tuesday, standing with Mrs. Albright outside Wingate University's Jesse Helms Centre, which its administrators say promotes "traditional values, democratic government and free enterprise," Sen. Helms expressed a willingness to deal.

He said up until now, the administration had "stonewalled" his demands for changes relating to the treaty, which bans the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

But Sen. Helms said that last Wednesday, he and key Democratic Sen. Joseph Biden had worked together for more than four hours and "covered 21 differences and resolved them."

"There'd be no problem with it (the treaty) if we can continue to negotiate as we have been for the last few days," Sen. Helms said.

Sen. Helms said that the issue of United Nations reform would not be tied to the chemical weapons treaty.

He gave no details about the compromises under discussion.

Administration officials have said that while they oppose amendments to the treaty itself, they would consider adding conditions to the Senate resolution of ratification to meet the concerns of Sen. Helms and others.

The chemical weapons treaty, negotiated under then-President George Bush, a Republican, was signed by the United States and 129 other countries in Paris on Jan. 12, 1993, and by last count, 161 countries have signed it.

Some 70 countries have ratified the pact and it will take effect on April 29, 1997.

President Bill Clinton and Mrs. Albright have both made Senate ratification of the pact a priority of his second term in office and have warned that if the Senate fails to act by April 29, the United States will be excluded from participating in the administration and monitoring of the pact.

This would be a major political loss for Mr. Clinton and Mrs. Albright.

At the news conference, Sen. Helms called the treaty "overrated" and said he feared the American people would have a "false sense of security about it because it's going to accomplish not one thing in the world in terms of protecting the American people."

19 killed in Albania in last 24 hours

TIRANA (AFP) — A total of 19 people, including a policeman, have been killed in Albania in the past 24 hours as armed bands continued to run amok in the crisis-hit country, various sources said Wednesday.

The new deaths bring to over 200 the number of those killed since residents began looting arms depots on Feb. 28.

The policeman was gunned down during a failed bank robbery in the northern town of Burrel Tuesday evening. Three gunmen shot the officer, who was standing guard outside the bank, with automatic weapons but were pursued and arrested by security forces, the Interior Ministry said.

The killing brings to five the number of policemen slain in three days by criminals, who have been operating unchecked in many parts of the country since fleeing jails at the highpoint of the unrest in Albania.

In Tirana, two criminals were killed in a shootout between rival gangs. Unknown assailants shot and killed a man in his car and injured a four-year-old child who was in the same vehicle.

A service station near the southern town of Vlora, the cradle of the uprising, was attacked Tuesday afternoon.

The owner and one employee were killed and three other people were injured, a local journalist said.

Three bodies riddled with bullets were found by the side of a road at Levan, near the southern town of Fier, the Interior Ministry said.

An 18-year-old man was gunned down in the southern town of Berat, while two people were killed in what appeared to be a traditional vendetta in the northern town of Mirdita.

An 18-year-old man was also found dead in his home in the northern town of Mat, while a clash between rival gangs in another northern town, Bulqiz, left one person dead.

Greek media, quoting reporters in the south, said that two people were killed in Gjirokastra and three in Korca.

Unrest broke out in Albania in January over the collapse of bogus investment schemes and developed into an anti-government uprising that has left much of the south in rebel hands.

Meanwhile, Italy Wednesday expelled more than 100 Albanian refugees deemed dangerous, sending them back to their country, while the influx of people to Italy from Albania appeared to have eased, police said.

Those expelled Wednesday joined about 700 others

taken back to Albanian in recent days by army helicopters, among them prison escapees and criminals, according to authorities here.

Their expulsion was made possible by a decree adopted on March 19 following an exodus of some 12,000 Albanians fleeing violence in their country.

Authorities said meanwhile that for the second consecutive night Tuesday, no boats carrying refugees had been reported crossing the Strait of Otranto separating the two countries.

The last arrival of refugees dates back to Monday evening when an Albanian cargo ship transporting 556 people docked in the southeast port of Brindisi after being assisted in rough waters by the Italian Coast Guard.

Italy, overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, Monday decided to reinforce a 1991 accord with Albania on patrolling the Adriatic to prevent any more arrivals.

The accord allows the Italian Navy to patrol in Albania's territorial waters and convince boats transporting refugees to head back to their port of origin.

Italy has also led calls for the European Union to send a multinational force to Albania to assist in the distribution of humanitarian aid.

Strong quake rocks Japanese island causing injuries, landslides

TOKYO (AFP) — A strong earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter Scale struck the southern Japanese island of Kyushu Wednesday, followed by three major aftershocks, causing injuries and landslides, officials said.

At least 16 people were injured, but no one appeared to be hurt seriously, a police official said.

The epicentre of the quake, which occurred at around 5:31 p.m. (0831 GMT), was located in the western part of Kagoshima prefecture on Kyushu, at a

depth of 20 kilometres, the meteorological agency said.

At least 17 landslides occurred while five houses were damaged, officials of the Kagoshima prefectural police department said, adding that cracks had been found in four roads in the prefecture.

Three aftershocks, measuring 5.2, then 4.7 and 4.1, hit at 5:39 p.m., 6:03 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. A minor aftershock of 3.2 was recorded at 6:15 p.m. A total of 140 tremors have been monitored, agency officials said.

A 47-year-old woman in

Miyanojo was struck on the head by a rock, while a 56-year-old woman in the same area who was hurt when a chest of drawers toppled on her, the police officials said.

The tremor was most strongly felt in Akune, Sendai and Miyanojo near the epicentre, registering five-plus on the Japanese quake scale of up to seven.

The meteorological agency warned further aftershocks could hit the area, causing tremors of up to four on the Japanese scale, but said there was no danger of "tsunami" waves.

IRA bursts into U.K. election campaign with double blast

WILMSLOW, England (AFP) — The Irish Republican Army (IRA) burst into the British electoral campaign Wednesday with two bombs that plunged much of northern England's morning rail traffic into chaos and united the main candidates in condemnation.

The twin explosions at the train station in this town of 30,000 near Manchester were clearly intended only to bring morning commuter traffic to a standstill, which they did over much of the network that runs through Wilmslow.

Two IRA-coded telephone warnings, the first to a woman resident, the second to a railway area supervisor, allowed for the complete evacuation of the station and there were neither injuries nor serious damage.

There was a coded warning in nearby Doncaster, but no explosion.

The first blast, at a junction box on the line near the station, shook the surrounding residential area at around 6:30 a.m.

The second, 35 minutes later on the rail line about 200 meters from the station, detonated as firemen helped police cordon off the area.

"Fortunately none of the officers was injured," said a fire official. "It appears that the intention of the devices was disruption rather than injury."

Prime Minister John Major condemned the explosions.

"This looks very much as though it was the work of the IRA — it was a two-fingered insult to democracy at the start of the general election campaign in which Sinn Féin is fielding candidates right across Northern Ireland," he said at Heathrow Airport.

Sinn Féin is the political wing of the IRA.

Mr. Major, fighting an uphill campaign to keep his job in the face of crushing Labour opposition leads in the polls, called on the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, and his deputy, Martin McGuinness, to condemn the blasts.

"I hope Mr. Adams and Mr. McGuinness will unreservedly condemn what happened at Wilmslow and give a firm assurance there will be no more bombs during this campaign."

"I mean, unequivocally, no weasel words, no ifs, no buts, but a clear condemna-

tion of what has happened and an assurance that there will be no more of it during the general election campaign," he said.

"I hope very much that the IRA-Sinn Féin are not going to conduct a campaign in the ballot box in Northern Ireland and with bombs on the mainland."

Labour leader Tony Blair called the blasts "an evil act" and said that if they were confirmed to have been the work of the IRA, the organisation "should be in no doubt that whether it is the present government or any future government, there will be an iron determination to stand up to outrages of this kind."

A furious Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, called the attacks "part of... a cowardly strategy of sneaky violence by the IRA. It has completely failed," he said. "It has done nothing but divide the Irish people more deeply."

Sinn Féin and the IRA blame Mr. Major's Conservative government and its perceived political debts to the Ulster Unionist MPs who support him in parliament for intransigence in the peace process, in ab-

yance until after the May 1 elections.

Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, Britain's third party, called the bombing "a stupid, futile but potentially fatal attempt by the IRA to bomb themselves into the British election campaign."

"Of course it won't succeed. It hasn't succeeded in the past — and it's not going to succeed now."

The IRA has been bombing in Northern Ireland and the British mainland since it broke a long ceasefire some 13 months ago with a devastating bomb in London's financial district that killed two and did some £100 million (\$160 million) of damage.

Ken Maginnis, an Ulster Unionist MP, predicted more attacks, followed by a bogus ceasefire just before election day.

"I would not be surprised if on the Sunday prior to the election, following a number of incidents like today's, that the IRA will call a cynical and bogus ceasefire to try to wrong-foot the incoming government," he said.

Australia plans convention to consider republic

CANBERRA (R) — Australia will hold a 10-day convention in December to consider whether the country should become a republic, replacing Queen Elizabeth as head of state, Prime Minister John Howard said Wednesday.

But Mr. Howard, an avowed monarchist, emphasised that his government had no particular commitment to the republic, a favourite cause of former Labour Prime Minister Paul Keating.

"The commitment to hold the convention does not represent any decision by the government that a change is necessary or desirable, nor any dissatisfaction with the workings of the current system," Mr. Howard told parliament.

The Labour opposition, defeated in elections by Mr. Howard's Conservatives a year ago, has ridiculed the government's plans for a constitutional convention as an attempt to bury the issue.

Faced with pressure for change, Labour says, Mr. Howard chose to set up a committee — hardly a decisive move.

But Mr. Howard himself said the convention would stick to the issue of the republic, and not wander into the distractions of other constitutional issues.

"The government has decided that on balance this convention should deal only with the question of the head-of-state and therefore any possible change to a Republican form of government," Mr. Howard told parliament.

The Republican cause has lost momentum since Mr. Howard replaced Mr. Keating as prime minister in the March 1996 elections.

Opinion polls show that about half of Australians favour a republic but also that they think the country has more pressing problems. Many people do not care whether the British monarch or an Australian president is head of state.

As soon as Mr. Keating left, the official rhetoric vanished and public discussion of the republic subsided.

Mr. Howard said the convention would have 152 delegates and public input would be encouraged.

"Public submissions will be invited to allow the community to inject into the convention ideas on these issues," he said.

U.S. recalls envoy in Belarus after diplomat's expulsion

MOSCOW (AFP) — The United States has recalled its ambassador in Minsk after Belarus expelled a U.S. diplomat who attended an anti-government rally, a U.S. spokeswoman said Wednesday.

The Ambassador, Kenneth Yalowitz, "has been recalled to Washington for consultations," he is expected to arrive in Washington March 27. No date has been set for his return," said Minsk embassy spokeswoman Janet Demaray in a telephone interview.

The recall does not automatically mean a change in diplomatic relations between Washington and Minsk, she said.

"It certainly has not been announced that this is a permanent step, or that the level of our embassy has been lowered."

Mr. Yalowitz became ambassador in Minsk in November 1994.

U.S. diplomat Serge Alexandrov left Belarus Monday after being given a 24-hour expulsion notice by the Belarusian authorities who arrested him at an opposition rally in Minsk Sunday and accused him of spying for the CIA.

Ms. Demaray repeated the embassy's protest that Mr. Alexandrov "was carrying out normal diplomatic activities by observing the protest."

Washington was "considering an appropriate response," she said.

"One of the options is the expulsion of a Belarusian diplomat from the United States."

The growing U.S.-Belarus feud comes against a crackdown on dissent and the freedom of the media by Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Last Friday the United States suspended \$40 million in aid to Belarus because of what it called human rights violations.

Mr. Alexandrov was arrested while attending an anti-Lukashenko protest Sunday which had been declared illegal under restrictions imposed March 6 and broken up by riot police.

Since then, the Belarus authorities, who already have full control over all the domestic media, have clamped down on reporting by the Russian television networks.

The private NTV network said Wednesday that its correspondent had been stripped of his accreditation and threatened with expulsion.

All three big Russian networks — ORT, RTR and NTV — have been banned from transmitting footage in their reports out of Minsk.

NASA officials had previously said their goal was a manned mission to Mars by 2014.

Two probes were already on their way to the red planet. Mars Surveyor will orbit the planet in September, while Mars Pathfinder will touch down there July 4.

Scientists were still hotly debating whether there was life on Mars.

Those who believed in the possibility of life there got a boost last summer when what appeared to be traces of micro-organisms were found in a meteorite that landed in Antarctica.

But others say the micro-organisms formed after the meteorite landed on Earth.

NASA experiments may pave way for manned Mars mission

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said Tuesday it will add experiments to two probe missions to Mars that may hasten the advent of manned missions to the red planet.

NASA said one of the probes — both of which will be launched in 2001 — will land on the planet's surface and attempt to make a small amount of rocket fuel from the atmosphere.

Making fuel on Mars would eliminate the need for future missions there to have a fuel tank large enough for a return trip, cutting fuel-carrying costs by 40 per cent.

NASA had already planned to launch a Martian orbiter and a Martian lander with a robot from Cape Canaveral in March and April 2001.

The rover would collect rocks and soils for a later probe to return to Earth.

Wesley Huntress, NASA associate administrator for space science, said that for the first time since the 1960's NASA's Space Science Department will cooperate with the Human Space Flight Department on the exploration of another planet.

"This joint effort is a sign that NASA is acquiring the information that will be needed to a national decision, perhaps in decade or so, on whether or not to send humans to Mars," said Wilbur Trafton, associate administrator for space

flight.

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Bangladesh President Shahabuddin Ahmad (left) and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (right) watch three world leaders (middle left-right) Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, South African President Nelson Mandela and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel wave at cheering crowds at the country's 26th independence anniversary celebration in Dhaka Wednesday. An estimated 200,000 people gathered at the city's Suhrawardy Garden to listen to the world leaders at the day's main function. The portrait behind the leaders shows Bangladesh's independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mrs. Hasina's father who was killed in a 1975 army coup (Reuters photo)

World leaders pay tribute to Bangladesh war heroes

DHAKA (AFP) — South African President Nelson Mandela, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel Wednesday joined Bangladeshi leaders in lighting a flame to mark the delayed celebrations of the country's 25th anniversary of independence.

Four decorated war veterans carried the torch and the green and red national flag to a central Dhaka park, where some 50,000 people had gathered to witness the spectacle.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed accepted the torch to light the "Eternal Flame" at the Victory Monument Complex, while President Shahabuddin Ahmad hoisted the flag.

Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan on March 26, 1971, sparking a bloody nine-month war, but celebrations of the 25th anniversary were delayed for

12 months by internal political turmoil.

Mr. Mandela, addressing the cheering crowd, said: "People of the African continent join me in paying tribute to the people of Bangladesh."

"Every man must be free and the fight for freedom will continue until that comes. We have come to Bangladesh to pay homage to its people... to know what it is to fight for freedom."

The crowd chanted "Mandela, Mandela" as he continued his address, paying tribute to Bangladeshi freedom fighters.

Mr. Arafat, flashing a 'V' for victory sign, thanked Bangladesh for its support of the Palestinian cause.

"I am grateful for Bangladesh's support, which will always be remembered," he said.

"I recall with great respect (Bangladeshi founding leader)

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was a great friend of Palestine... and myself."

Mr. Demirel also fondly recalled the support of Bangladesh for the Turkish people and announced the naming of a major avenue in Ankara after Mujibur Rahman.

The three leaders earlier flew to nearby Savar district by military helicopters and placed wreaths at the National Martyrs' Monument, where they stood in silence as the bugle played the last post.

The monument commemorates some three million Bangladeshis who died in the war against Pakistan, after which Bangladesh became independent.

Bangladesh had until then been part of Pakistan, known as East Pakistan.

The streets of the capital, Dhaka, took on a festive air as thousands marched with the country's green and red

flag. The anniversary of independence is marked by a public holiday here.

The three foreign leaders arrived here Tuesday to attend the anniversary celebrations and were scheduled to stay for three days.

But Mr. Arafat is expected to cut short his visit to take part in a new round of Middle East peace talks, a local official said here earlier Wednesday.

He was likely to leave here Wednesday evening and may travel to Rabat for the talks, the official added, though his destination and time of departure had not been confirmed by the Palestinian side.

The official's comments came amid reports U.S. envoy Dennis Ross would travel to the Middle East Wednesday for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat.

Zaire rebels reject power-sharing with Mobutu

LOME (R) — A Zairean rebel representative, in Togo for a summit on the Zaire crisis, Wednesday rejected sharing power with ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko's political party before elections.

Bizima Karaha, foreign policy strategist for rebel leader Laurent Kabila, told British Broadcasting Corporation Radio in the Togolese capital Lome that power-sharing, proposed by Mr. Mobutu's party Tuesday, was out of the question.

"We shall never, never enter into any power-sharing with the government in Kinshasa. One thing for sure, we are not fighting for power-sharing," he said.

"We are fighting for democracy, we are fighting for freedom, we are fighting for human rights respect, we are fighting for the united country, we are fighting for a prosperous country, an end to their games which they have been using for more than 30 years."

Asked about a specific proposal made by Mr. Mobutu's Popular Revolutionary Movement in Kinshasa for temporary power-sharing before elections, Mr. Karaha said:

"The problem is not power-sharing. The problem is those people who have been killing our people. Those people do not want democracy, those people do not want freedom."

"The issue is not power-sharing because you can have power-sharing today

and the following day Zaire will still collapse. The problem is democracy, freedom, human rights respect. That's all that we want."

Mr. Karaha said the rebels had sent a delegation to Wednesday's Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in Lome on Zaire because they were invited, but he said the delegation would not start negotiations with the government at the talks.

"The only problem is that the people in Kinshasa did not have a mandate to negotiate. Secondly, they were not willing to negotiate. But I have just heard that this time maybe they are trying to be serious," he said.

"So we think that very soon we will start negotiations."

International pressure on the two sides to stop fighting has mounted sharply in the past week and was personified by the presence of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Lome.

Neither Mr. Mobutu, suffering from prostate cancer, nor Mr. Kabila was expected in Lome. But the prospect of a meeting between their delegations was taken seriously by diplomats.

Top French and U.S. officials were also in Lome.

South African President Nelson Mandela, criticised in the past for refusing the lead role in the continent's conflicts, has strongly backed efforts to bring peace in Zaire, sending envoys to both sides in the

past week.

His vice-president, Thabo Mbeki, was to attend the Lome summit after apparently persuading Mr. Kabila to accept the principle of talks with Mr. Mobutu's top lieutenants instead of the 66-year-old leader himself.

The potential break-up of Africa's third biggest country, which Mr. Mobutu has ruled for more than three decades, is a nightmare diplomats want to avoid.

Congolese President Pascal Lissouba said in an interview published Wednesday that an African peace force should be sent to Zaire.

"An African force must intervene in Zaire where Africa must play the main role (in bringing peace), even if the logistical support comes from outside the continent," he told the French daily newspaper Le Parisien.

More than 1,000 U.S., French and Belgian troops are massed in Congo, ready to evacuate Westerners from Zaire if necessary.

In theory, Mr. Kabila has little reason to stop fighting. His troops already control a quarter of the country.

"They are moving steadily against Lubumbashi, capital of the southern province of Shaba whose vast reserves of copper, cobalt and precious metals have made Mr. Mobutu's elite super-rich."

The special OAU summit on the Zaire crisis opened in Lome Wednesday.

A colourful ceremony of dancers and singers opened

Armenia to free Azeri PoWs before talks

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's Interfax News Agency said Tuesday that Armenia would free Azeri prisoners taken in fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave as a unilateral gesture of goodwill ahead of talks in Moscow later this week.

Officials in the Armenian capital Yerevan could not be contacted to comment on the report. It could not be independently confirmed.

Interfax, reporting from Yerevan, quoted an Armenian Foreign Ministry statement as saying: "By this move, Armenia confirms free prisoners of war without preconditions on the principle of 'all for all'."

Saying Armenia believed in a compromise to end the conflict over Karabakh, it added that Armenian officials were working with the Red Cross to arrange the transfer of prisoners and urged Karabakh and Azeri leaders to follow suit.

It was not clear how many prisoners were involved. Meanwhile, Azeri President Heydar Aliyev Tuesday sharply criticised the appointment of a separatist leader from Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh enclave as prime minister of Armenia.

"This does not correspond to norms and international laws. We cannot accept such an appointment," he told reporters during a visit to the Ukrainian capital, Kiev.

"We view the appointment of the leader of Karabakh's Armenian community, Robert Kocharyan, as Armenian prime minister as negative. We do not understand it because Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan."

Nagorno-Karabakh, entirely within Azerbaijan's borders but populated mostly by ethnic Armenians, broke away from Baku's rule in the late 1980s. Thousands were killed in fighting before a ceasefire was declared three years ago.

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Reinvigorating democracy

THE PRIMARY mandate of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, according to His Majesty King Hussein's letter of appointment, is to hold free and democratic elections for the 13th Parliament. That we are sure that Dr. Majali and his team will accomplish. The question though is, will the government hold these elections on the basis of the current law, or will the law be amended.

The government has obviously inherited the unfinished business of defining the final shape and form of the law. The outgoing government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti succeeded in the last Lower House of Parliament ordinary session in adopting the one-person, one-vote criterion and left the other complimentary features of a contemporary election law for a later stage. Mr. Kabariti's government had said it would, in due time, introduce more amendments to the law, presumably in temporary form. It had also pledged to consult all political parties and activists.

Almost all the parties, consented to the one-person, one-vote formula provided that the other remaining features of the current election law are dealt with before this summer's elections. On top of the measures that the outgoing government was expected to tackle was the redistribution of the electoral districts in order to make the voting powers of all citizens equal. This especially entails giving more seats to highly populated regions of the country. There is no sense in endorsing the one-person, one-vote equation as long as the electoral districts are not equally populated. Another issue is the minimum voting age that is currently 19. Most democratic countries consider 18 as the age of political maturity.

The issue of the quota, whether for women or religious or ethnic minorities, also needs reconsideration. If we are to be faithful to the Constitution and international norms the quota system, per se, is unacceptable in principle. Another promise made by the previous government was to entrust the judiciary with supervising the elections. People, therefore, expect that these amendments should be introduced in order to ensure the election of a more representative parliament. The government is, therefore, called upon to soon start consulting with political parties and political activists in order to refine the election law and create an atmosphere that is conducive to energising people's attitudes towards democracy. There is already a great deal of frustration resulting from the political and economic climate in the country and region. A civilised debate over the law and a lively electioneering season will help dispel that frustration.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i discussed Israel's building of a Jewish settlement on Arab East Jerusalem land, which is causing the present tension in the region, and said that the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is responsible for its consequences. Fahed Fanek recalled that Mr. Netanyahu had stated in a television interview that his intelligence services had warned him against going ahead with plans to build the settlement because the Palestinians were threatening to carry out bombing attacks in Tel Aviv. According to the writer, Mr. Netanyahu said he realised that this might happen, adding that he bears the responsibility for any violent reaction to his building the Jewish settlement. Therefore, said the writer, Mr. Netanyahu is responsible for the bomb attack and not the Palestinians who have all the right to fight off occupation by all available means. The Israeli settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim is not really needed to house Jewish settlers, who can settle in the existing settlements or inside Israel proper, of which, according to Israeli statistics, only 25 per cent are now inhabited, said the writer. Therefore, one can conclude that the Jews do not really need another settlement which can trigger tension and force the Palestinians to retaliate through suicide bombings, added the writer. He said that Mr. Netanyahu's provocation of the Palestinians, his determination to perpetuate Israeli occupation of Arab land and his defiance of the whole world are responsible for the present deteriorating situation in Palestine and the whole region.

A WRITER for Al Dustur said reforming the public administration system will take a long time and therefore the government should look for priorities and embark on areas that need most urgent addressing. In his view, the health sector should come first because, he said, it is suffering from many imbalances. Mohammad Daoud suggested that a ministerial committee conduct an in-depth inspection of health centres and hospitals, saying that such inspection will reveal the dereliction, the negligence and the indifference displayed by responsible as well as lower rank officials. The result of such negligence, said the writer, is a very poor health service to the tens of thousands of outpatients, added the writer. He said that the government should start the clean-up process from the top because the responsible persons, with authority, are abusing their position and ill behaving giving a bad example to their employees. The writer said that the government should come up with certain rules and criteria for appointing persons in responsible positions if it wants to ensure that reforms are successful.

The View from Academia

Change — not easy but possible

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

THERE IS no doubt that change, especially when we talk about human conduct in society (both at the formal and informal levels) and human values and attitudes, is not easy. For one thing, human beings (as social, psychological beings) resist change. People resort and fall into easy, convenient habits and modes of behaviour which become stronger and more adamant as time passes by. For another, change is generally a complex process which, like many processes in nature and in life, takes time for its various (often disparate and fragmented) components to combine and gather enough energy and force to make a difference. This must be admitted.

But change can be expedited or speeded up. If we, as human societies (both individuals and institutions) leave things to take care of themselves (wait for the so-called wheel of history to turn by itself) and refrain from making conscious efforts to effect change, change will take an incredibly long time to materialise. If, on the other hand, we (as individuals and institutions) have the willingness and will to effect change (i.e. put our shoulders to the wheel and make change an objective and a priority to do so), change can happen faster than we think. Human beings (often represented by the governments they elect) can make an impact, a difference.

For change to happen, certain requirements or conditions have to be met. There is, first, the awareness of the need for change. Second, there is the question of the understanding, the comprehension of what precisely needs to change. Third, there is, as has just been said, the need for both the willingness and the will. Fourth, there is the matter of the ability and vision of those who are to carry out or implement the change. These four (primary) conditions or requirements are both interconnected and interdependent, and such four requirements and conditions must all be available (or made available) for change to happen.

We, in Jordan, have a reason (reasons may be) to be hopeful and optimistic — though by no means sure, presumptuous or complacent — about the likelihood and possibility (perhaps even inevitability) of change.

Why?

Well, the first condition or requirement listed above (i.e. the need for change) has strongly materialised. Recently — since the launching of the Middle East peace process in Madrid, the signing of peace agreements between the

Arab parties and Israel, and the glimpse we have had of what life is like under peace and b) the dramatic events of the past two weeks (the orphanage children and the change of government) — the need for change has become obvious to everyone.

We have recently become aware, more so than at any time before, of the necessity of making changes. The challenges we are facing in the times ahead are immense: we can no longer afford to face the world of the twenty-first century — the world of the post-peacemaking era (or even of peacemaking itself), the world of free market economy, the world of global competition and global collaboration, the world of hard-earned money — with the same attitude and approach with which we faced the sixties and the seventies. There are tough competitors and rivals out there, in the region and abroad; to make a buck in the world is no longer easy, and no one gives handouts anymore. Not only do we have to sweat and rely on ourselves, we have to be good, very good, and excellent in order to compete well and survive. For this reason, we need to reform ourselves, eradicate the negative, the harmful and the obstructive from amongst and within us. This, I believe, has become obvious, and this is the first step of the process of change.

The second requirement or condition, as listed above, has also materialised. A close look at our political discourse shows that, for one thing, we have come to understand ourselves and our problems better and that, for another, we no longer hesitate, shy or prevaricate ourselves from seeing our own weaknesses and failings. Read the letter of designation which His Majesty the King sent to the new Jordanian premier. Look at the following excerpt, for example:

"At the top of these negative accumulations and challenges facing us is ridding the government institutions of inefficiency, loss of vitality and inability to effect change, to develop and to modernise. We must base our plan on objectivity and must search for qualified, energetic, loyal and honourable citizens of this dear nation and appoint them in the proper places, enabling them to use their potentials in the service of the homeland. This must be coupled with a process of purifying these institutions of all the inactive, inefficient and disloyal elements which shielded themselves in their positions, standing in the face of all young, loyal, efficient elements that are capable of serving and developing."

Does not this passage, and passages like these in the letter, express well what we have been expressing for years in the press and the media? Does it not reflect a deep awareness of the problems which we have been suffering from and the obstacles which have been crippling our development and progress (bureaucracy, inefficiency, corruption, etc.)? And are not the words used here as eloquent, bitter and bold as we all wish them to be?

It is good news that the leadership in the country, the government and all concerned with the welfare of the country show a deep understanding of the impediments which stand in the way and the causes of our regression and backwardness. And this is another crucial step in the process of change.

As for the third and fourth conditions (the willingness, the will, the ability and the vision of those who are in spearhead change), there is no need to doubt their existence. I see no reason, in principle, why the team which has been selected to make the necessary changes should fail in the endeavour. The education and experience of most members of the team certainly enable them to be up to the task. There is no problem, as far as I can tell, with the ability and vision. We, in this country, have many people of great abilities and great vision.

The crucial point, however, has to do with willingness and will. There can be no reform or change unless and until those who are to carry it out are willing to initiate reform or change, to take risks for it and, equally importantly, to persevere. The challenges are immense and the problems are immense, and those who are to implement the reform or change need all the courage they can muster. "Persevere" is a key word here, for many in the Arab culture of today (and this is a social disease which has infiltrated into our midst) may be willing and enthusiastic for a few minutes, weeks, months. Slowly, the will and willingness begin to fade, melt and vanish. I hope this will not happen in the case of the present government. We cannot afford to have it happen.

There can be no change without the necessary level of willingness, will, perseverance and determination. This is the most crucial point regarding change in our part of the world at this particular moment in history. Where there is a will, there is a way. It is as simple as that.

Netanyahu — 'ideological fanatic or weak-willed careerist?'

By Gwynne Dyer

"NOBODY HAS been able to solve the mystery of how Netanyahu's brain works," wrote Israeli columnist Yoel Marcus recently. Eleven months after the Israeli prime minister won power on a platform of "peace with security," the mystery has only deepened.

Much of the time, Benjamin Netanyahu functions like a normal leader, expressing ritual outrage at the actions of his opponents and denying that his own actions have anything to do with it.

"Do I send my people to blow up babies like this?" he asked reporters after the suicide bomb in a Tel Aviv café last Friday. Nobody was rude enough to reply that no, when Israel kills Arab babies, it uses fighter-bombers or heavy artillery instead.

When a reporter asked about the connection between the recent upsurge in Palestinian violence and Netanyahu's decision to build a new Jewish suburb on Palestinian land in east Jerusalem, he used a classic politician's evasion: "I find that line of questioning obnoxious and immoral." So far, so good; the man may be wrong, he might even be wicked, but his tactics make perfectly good sense.

His strategy, however, does not make sense — not unless he is secretly committed to destroying the Arab-Israeli peace process. This kind of ideological obsession does not fit the image of a cynical opportunist, spouting right-wing rhetoric for personal advantage, that Netanyahu gained during his years as ambassador to the United States and subsequently as leader of the Likud Party.

What puzzles Israelis and non-Israeli observers alike is that Netanyahu repeatedly provokes unnecessary confrontations with the Palestinians, the Arabs and the international community.

In September, he opened a second entrance to the tunnel under the Western Wall in Jerusalem, provoking Palestinian protests that led to savage confrontations and 70 deaths. There was ample warning of the scale of Palestinian



backlash if he opened the tunnel, and there was no significant public pressure in Israel to go ahead with the opening. He did it anyway.

For eight long months Netanyahu refused to evacuate Hebron, as required by the Oslo peace accords. He was finally forced to pull Israeli troops out of the city in January in order to avoid a rupture with the United States. But the dust from that crisis had barely settled before he started the next one by announcing the building of a whole new Jewish suburb in East Jerusalem.

Last week the bulldozers started removing the pine trees from the ridge that local people call Jabal Abu Ghneim and the Israeli authorities refer to as Har Homa. The plan is to build housing for 27,000 Israelis, thus completing the ring of Jewish settlements that have cut off the Arab parts of Jerusalem from the rural West Bank since the Israel conquest in 1967.

The Palestinians have responded with mass protests and, in the case of the fundamentalist Islamic group Hamas, with a suicide bomb in Tel Aviv.

All this was completely predictable — so why did Netanyahu set it in motion? One hypothesis is that Netanyahu is a smoothly manipulative facade, is secretly a true fanatic. If he were dedicated to the destruction of the peace process in order to facilitate the spread of "Greater Israel" over every

square metre of what used to be Palestine, then his actions would make sense. The alternative hypothesis is that he does all this to placate the extremists in his own coalition, who would bring the government down if they did not get their way. (They, of course, do want the destruction of the peace process, as a matter of principle).

Netanyahu, on this hypothesis, does not really care either way so long as he stays in power, but he has to go along with the hard right for tactical reasons. Thus the delays on Hebron, the opening of the tunnel, and the Har Homa project. Thus his declaration last Friday that the Palestinians will never get the 90 per cent of the West Bank they expected under Oslo, but at most 45-50 per cent.

Thus, too, his recent proposal to scrap the Oslo timetable and move directly to "final status" talks on Palestinian refugees, the future of Jerusalem and Palestinian statehood. (It is better to discuss topics on which no agreement is possible than to follow a timetable that requires major transfers of territory to Palestinian rule at scheduled intervals over the next year).

But it is very hard to believe that Netanyahu is a hostage to his own right-wing on all these issues. They need him far more than he needs them. No other conceivable alliance could bring them and their extremist agenda into government, whereas Netanyahu could switch to a "national unity" coalition with Labour.

There have even been moves to ease the transition to such a coalition: members from Netanyahu's Likud Party and the opposition Labour Party recently made a joint call in the Knesset to lower from 80 to 61 the number of votes required in the 120-seat legislature to dismiss the prime minister without dissolving parliament. Then they could vote for a change of coalition without having to face a new general election.

So would the real Benjamin Netanyahu please stand up? Is he an ideological fanatic who does not care about losing power if he can just about the peace process first? Or is he just a weak-willed careerist who has been overruled by allies who are fanatics.

The former explanation fits nothing we used to know about Netanyahu's character. The latter hypothesis would explain almost everything he has done in the past 11 months, since it simply says that Netanyahu, isolated and dependent on ideologically motivated advisers, has come to believe that he must make constant concessions to his own right-wing allies.

In terms of the lethal impact of his policies on the peace process, unfortunately, it may not make any difference which hypothesis is right.

LETTERS

Why some are more equal?

To the Editor:

I WOULD like to take advantage of the "liberal" era we are living in to make an open plea to decision makers and women activists to address a critical and neglected issue, namely granting citizenship status to children of Jordanian women who are married to non-Jordanians. I am requesting this on several grounds, most significantly the right to equal citizenship before the law. Children of Jordanian men married to non-Jordanian women are automatically granted Jordanian citizenship, unlike children of Jordanian women who are not even granted residency permits, let alone citizenship status.

Why is there such discrimination? The only hypothetical assumption is that the concerned authorities are afraid that non-Jordanian men might seek to marry Jordanian women in order to get Jordanian citizenship. If this is the real obstacle to equal rights to citizenship, this is quite alarming. From the outset, it assumes that Jordanian women do not possess the intellectual capacity to discern the intentions of their suitors; even if we assume that this is the case, should the women's children be penalised for the rest of their lives because of their mothers' intellectual inadequacy?

Resorting to my general knowledge of academic and professional achievements of Jordanian women, I know that they possess at least "acceptable" level of intelligence and utilise it to make significant decisions in their lives. If this capacity is in question, then let us seriously scrutinise their right to vote, to occupy a seat in Parliament and other top administrative positions, to choose a marriage partner and, most critically, motherhood itself. Jordanian women are automatically granted the right to custody of their children of a certain age, yet they are deprived of the full benefits of that right in the citizenship law.

More specifically, and taken real cases as examples, I would refer to divorced women who were married to non-Jordanians. The offspring of those marriages find themselves in most handicapped positions: without citizenship or even residency permits they cannot enrol in schools, they are ineligible for any subsidy from the government (i.e., bread subsidies) since they are not included in the family register book nor in their mother's passports (which is stamped "children cannot be included because of the husband's citizenship"), they do not enjoy any citizenship rights, and they are not even allowed to remain in the country, except illegally.

This begs the question of why their mothers are even granted the right to their custody and to motherhood itself and, at the same time, asked to go through the suffering of seeing these children grow up out of the school system, living as illegal aliens and having to the end to give them up to their fathers whether they are fit for parenthood or not.

My plea is to decision makers to address the questions of these children not being Jordanians although they were born in this country (in most cases), their maternal grandparents are loyal Jordanians, they love their country, the Jordanian mother is a fully participating citizen who has been contributing to this society's advancement, and, most importantly, their mother is a tax-paying, intellectually capable person to grant them the right to a real existence.

The misery of these children and their mothers is real and addressing it is only humanitarian. Maybe the solution is to grant them at least provisional citizenship until a certain age when they can pick up and leave somewhere else.

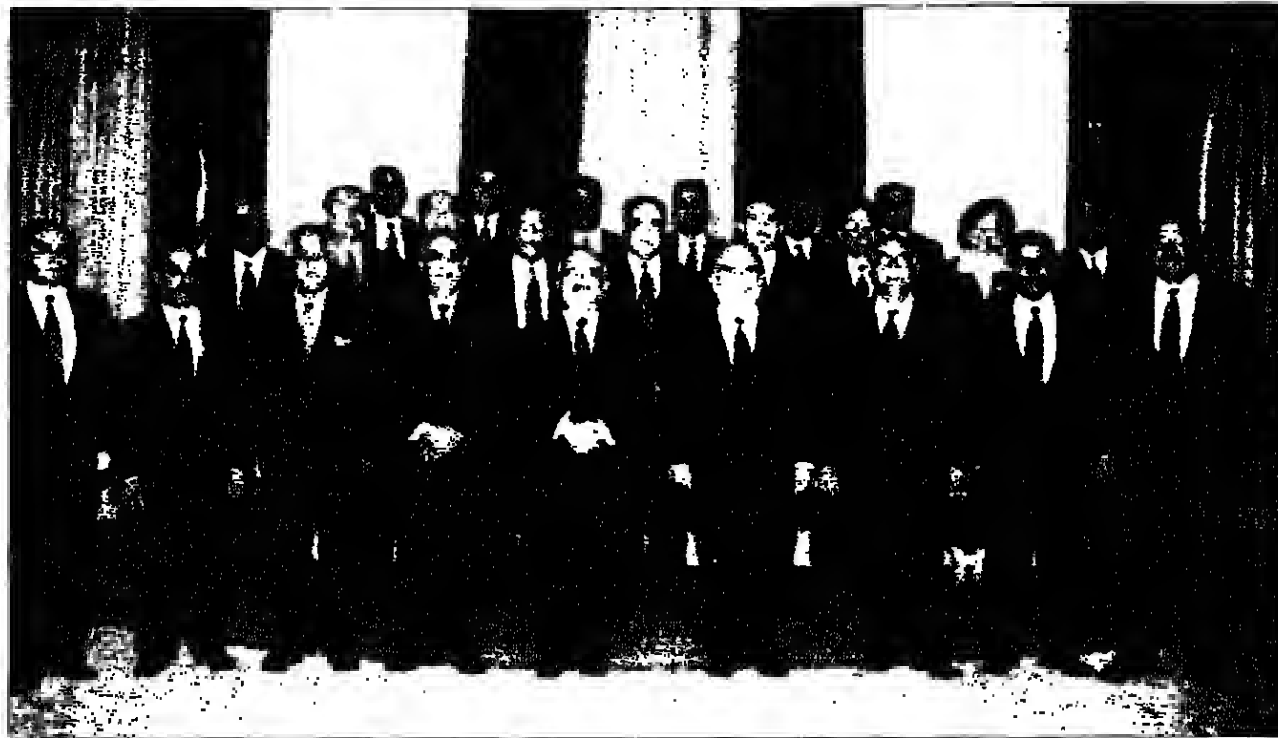
Abla Amawi,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Society on the Move

Behind the scenes in cabinet-making

In looking at last week's sudden government shake up, there may be more than meets the eye. We concentrate here on the art of cabinet-making. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali is said to have composed his government from three major "sources" of candidates. The first includes former members of the Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, wherein Dr. Majali was head of the Jordanian team. Those who were made ministers were Jawad Anani, Munther Haddadin, and Fayed Tarawneh. The second source includes persons from Dr. Majali's previous cabinets, from his previous post as University of Jordan president, and from government agencies where persons who served as secretaries general or senior government officials could be considered slated for promotion. Those who made it again from his previous two cabinets (Dec. 1993 and June 1994) are Jawad Anani, Abdul Salam Abbadi, and Rima Khalaf (it was Ms. Khalaf's first time as a minister). Those who were gleaned from his academic days are Saleh Khasawneh and Mahmud Kheir Mamsar, both professors at the University of Jordan. And of the 13 first-time ministers, 12 had served either previously or just prior to their appointment to the Majali cabinet, as senior government officials. They are So'odaddin Juma', Nathir Rashid, Munther Haddadin, Mohammad Saleh Horani, Hani Mulki, Suleiman Hafez, Qassem Abu Ein, Saleh Khasawneh, Mijlem Kheisha, Mohammad Kheir Mamsar, Akel Biltaji, and Samir Mutawi. The third source was the Senate, from where the premier brought in Nathir Rashid, Ashraf Kurdi and Jawad Anani.



His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and his new cabinet ministers stand in the reception room of Basman Palace after the swearing-in ceremony held on Wednesday, March 19, 1997 (photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

POWER NETWORKING: It is also common knowledge in political circles that in the early 90s, Dr. Majali and other associates such as Sami Gammoh, Bassam Saket, Marwan Doudin, Akel Biltaji and others composed an "informal" forum for political discussion called the "Monday Political Salon." From that group, which continues to meet every Monday at the home of the premier, Dr. Majali selected eight members to serve in his new cabinet. This group comprises just over one third of the Council of Ministers. It includes: Jawad Anani, Bassam Saket, Tayfiq Kreishan, Munther Haddadin, Qassem Abu Ein, Saleh Khasawneh, Akel Biltaji and Samir Mutawi.

THE OTHER PROSPECTS: Reports are that Dr. Majali had before him a list of 45 names to consider. It was perhaps only natural that he would take a long hard look at several persons who had served in his previous cabinets. Among those on the list of "also rans" were the following: Marwan Muasher who was slated to stay on as a minister along with five of his colleagues from the former cabinet of Abdul Karim Kabariti: Abdullah Ensour, Abdul Salam Abbadi, Rima Khalaf, Munther Masri and Nasser Lawzi. But by all accounts it looks like Dr. Muasher goes to Washington, again, but this time as the Kingdom's ambassador.

Senator Said Tel, who was deputy prime minister in Dr. Majali's earlier cabinet, appeared as a candidate in this recent list.

Amin Mahmoud is another figure from Dr. Majali's first Council of Ministers who was noted to possibly take up his former appointment as minister of culture, but also the Ministry of Youth to the portfolio in the trimming down process undertaken by the new prime minister. Dr. Mahmoud is currently president of Anman Private University. Considered too for this same post was former Minister of State Fawaz Abul Ghanam who also served in Dr. Majali's first cabinet. Dr. Abul Ghanam is retired. Both Drs. Mahmoud and Abul Ghanam were first-time ministers in December 1993.

Another familiar name from the first Majali days is

that of former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Hassan.

Also from that earlier government, Khaled Omari was listed along with Eid Dhiyat as prospects for minister of education and higher education. Dr. Omari, who had that same portfolio in Dr. Majali's December 1993 cabinet, is now president of Jerash University, and Dr. Dhiyat was named president of Mutia University after former president Abdul Rahman Attiyat resigned in what some newspapers were insisting was a demand of then Prime Minister Kabariti in late February.

Another former minister of state under Dr. Majali was listed. He is Khaled Zo'ubi, who was minister of state for legal affairs.

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour was a strong candidate for minister of interior, as was Anuman Mayor Mandoul Abbadi, who was listed as a possible for the post of deputy prime minister and minister of interior in a joint portfolio. Ambassador Trad Al Fayed, who is currently the Kingdom's ambassador to Qatar, once served as Ministry of Information secretary general.

The name of Khaled Ghazawi, former minister of labour under Dr. Majali's first cabinet, was said to have been introduced as a candidate for minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment by the person who eventually got the job, Tayfiq Kreishan. Mr. Ghazawi occasionally writes for some local papers.

Michel Hamarneli, director of the Office of the Crown Prince, was listed as a candidate for minister of tourism. In the late 70s and early 80s he was that ministry's secretary general.

Two persons who were being considered for the post of minister of public works and housing were Secretary General of the Jordan Valley Authority Dureid Mahasneh and Jordan Electricity Company Director General Marwan Bushnaq.

Drs. Auwar Bilbesi and Mohammad Jamal, both dermatologists, were listed as contenders for the post of minister of health. Dr. Bilbesi was once secretary general of the Ministry of Health.

Taleb Rifai, head of the Investment Promotion Corporation, was considered for the newly combined Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications. Newspaper reports yesterday said Dr. Rifai is considering leaving his post for an international job.

Jeanette Mufit, who ran unsuccessfully against Toujan Faisal for the Circassian seat in Parliament in Amman's Third District, could have been the second woman to hold the position of minister of social development. Ms. Mufit has been an English language and literature instructor at the Jordan University for Women.

THE CLASSIFIEDS: With the appointment of several ministers, positions were vacated in various important posts; some have already been filled on an acting basis, others remain open. The return of Ambassador Fayed Tarawneh from Jordan's embassy in Washington, D.C. would have made the coveted post one to watch, but, as we said earlier, all signs currently point to Dr. Muasher as the next "number one" to the U.S. capital.

Over at the Jordan Cement Factories Company, the post of chairman becomes vacant with the appointment of Bassam Saket as a minister.

Hani Mulki's two hats as Royal Scientific Society president and Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) secretary general are now being worn respectively on an acting basis by Dr. Said Nimer Alloush, an chemist who has been RSS vice president since 1991, and of the HCST by Dr. Khalid Shreideh, a physicist and mathematician, and Nancy Bakir an administrator. Both Dr. Shreideh and Ms. Bakir have been with the HCST for eight years. Dr. Shreideh takes on the responsibility of acting secretary general for science and technology, and Ms. Bakir becomes acting secretary general for administration. The RSS is a research entity and thus Dr. Alloush was chosen to take the post of acting president. The HCST, however, is mandated to support the projects of universities and research organizations, and thus the two appointments there fall in line with the nature of the jobs at hand.

The posts of two secretaries general may have to be

filled with the appointment of former Ministry of Finance Secretary General Suleiman Hafez and former Ministry of Culture Secretary General Qassem Abu Ein, who both went on to become ministers of those entities. As the Ministry of Culture, however, was joined with the Ministry of Youth, it could be that only one secretary general will be named. The Ministry of Youth you may recall was left without a secretary general with the swift resignation of Issam Arida. The position was nearly clinched by prime ministry advisor Rafe' Shaheen, but only this week Mr. Shaheen, a former Jordan Television quiz show host, was made advisor to the prime minister for information affairs.

And finally, the appointment of Akel Biltaji as minister of tourism leaves a top spot vacant at Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) where Mr. Biltaji was vice president for investments. RJ appointments for vice presidential positions are usually made in-house. RJ, of course, is still working on privatisation.

ABOUT FACE: Before the senior government submitted its resignation, one of Jordan's 12 governors, excluding those of the Ministry of Interior, submitted then withdrew his resignation. Governor of Aqaba far almost one year, Salem Al Turk, a former Lieutenant General, said that his resignation had been accepted by then Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat, but His Majesty King Hussein asked him to stay on. According to Governor Al Turk, who retired from the Jordan Armed Forces in 1993, he was about to say farewell to his colleagues and associates in Aqaba when he was called by the King. He did not elaborate on why he resigned, but one would expect that a phone call from the King would help to ease most grievances. So back to his post, Governor Al Turk watches over the lands of Wadi Ru'us, Wadi Araba, and Aqaba proper.

DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS: There were other celebrations around town other than the families and friends of new ministers pounding down doors to congratulate them. The Pakistani embassy went all out to celebrate the republic's 50th anniversary of independence and its national day of the InterContinental Hotel on Sunday. One had a hard time finding a parking spot as it seemed all the country had turned out for the affair. It was then Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour who cut the ceremonial cake and left soon afterwards. Ambassador Ali Sarwar Noori and his wife Meher were delighted with the reception. On Tuesday, Greek Ambassador Aristides Sotiropoulos and his wife Georgia hosted their first National Day of Greece reception since their arrival in Amman last year. Also a hardy show, the event was held too at the InterContinental.

THEMES TO LURE: Two, not so new, restaurants have gone under renovations yet again hoping to attract additional and perhaps more diverse patrons. First is Argeelal Restaurant co-owned by Riadh Sayed and Marie-claire Marraam. The proprietors have expanded their dining facilities, which cater to those who appreciate good Iraqi song. The other is Yesterday's, the former Castello Restaurant, which has adopted the tactic of themes as well as the "exclusive" (some call it discriminatory) policy of members only. Call them to get details on fees and fancies.

OOPS! In the excitement of announcing our new top ad man at Al Rai, we omitted giving you his name last week. He is none other than our loveable colleague Naim Hourani. Give him a call.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Every story tells a picture

Echoes of an Autobiography
By Naguib Mahfouz
Translated by Denys Johnson-Davies
Doubleday £14.99 pp 144

FEW BUT the most punctilious readers would claim a firm knowledge of the non-Anglophone Nobel Prize winners of recent decades. Saul Bellow, William Golding, Patrick White... yes, indeed. But Jaroslav Seifert, Camilo Cela, Wislawa Szymborska? Naguib Mahfouz is probably one of the most widely translated and read. A fair amount of his huge oeuvre (34 novels and 14 collections of short stories) is available in translation.

Best known is The Cairo Trilogy, which charts social and political change in early 20th-century Egypt through the three generations of a Cairo merchant-class family. But these works (realist narrative fiction very much in the 19th-century European tradition) were published in the late 1950s, and his subsequent work has been different — experimental, allusive, allegorical. Echoes of an Autobiography would seem to be the culmination of this tendency. As autobiographical writing it is about as far as you can get from the standard western literary offering. Take Philip Roth, say, or John Osborne or Kingsley Amis and then imagine an antithesis. Self-exposure, if any, is oblique. Narrative there is none. Facts are few. The format is a sequence of short pieces ranging from a few lines to a page or so, each titled: Rapture, The Man of Destinies, Question and Answer, Nadine Gordimer supplies an introduction, which is a graceful tribute by one Nobel laureate to another, and makes some illuminating comments.

And illumination is sometimes needed. In this mode, Mahfouz is not the most accessible of writers. Each of these subtle and frequently opaque pieces requires deconstruction. The process may be straightforward. A sparrow complains of a scorching summer day. "Ugh, when will autumn come?" and is told, "Why do you waste the good days that are granted you?" The resonances throughout the book are majestic and wide-reaching — the Arabian Nights, the Bible. The sparrow piece — with others — is pure Aesop. This is parable, allegory, fable — adding up to a meticulous and deliberately elusive construction of one man's vision. It is intellectual autobiography. This is the state of mind achieved during this life — with the life itself merely hinted at behind the smokescreen of anecdotes and reflection.



Naguib Mahfouz

A giant of a man commits a public murder. No witness will testify, out of fear. A dervish, considered simple-minded and so not called, notes this with rage and subsequently

takes revenge by killing whenever he can, singing the praises of God as he does so. A sceptic passing a house held to be haunted is told by a ghostly voice from within: "Keep to

BOOK REVIEW

the rational or else you'll be exposed to our cruel experience." These are two of the items more easily decoded, but others are tantalisingly ambiguous. From History has a man sitting beside the Nile whence emerges the head of a serene and beautiful woman, who invites him to follow her into the water, "so that you may see your dreams with your own eyes". With magical strength he advanced toward the water, his eyes not moving from her face. "I'm still working on that one."

There is a laconic, almost throwaway quality to the prose — and yet along with that the sense that every word counts. And also — inevitably and uncomfortably — that much may be lost in translation. Mahfouz is apparently notorious for difficult to translate, on account of the allusive subtlety of Arabic expressions which are impossible to render and also because of an idiosyncratic personal style. Many of the pieces end with a dying fall — a line which seems inconsequential in a way that can add to the baffling effect. But others are cleverly startling. A voice musing upon the inevitable departure from the bliss and beauty of the known world and the absence of the prospect of a hereafter is revealed to be that of a nine-month foetus. Others are haunting for their imagery: A child first experiencing a death in the household — "its breath coming and going in all the rooms."

Death is a constant theme. Death, change, the fickle nature of memory, Mahfouz's long years as a civil servant are hinted at when bureaucratic figures surface. The teeming life of Cairo reverberates behind the lines. The last section of the book is given over to the pronouncements of Sheikh Abd-Rabbih al-Ta'ib. This sage or prophet is prone to such utterances as, "if you are afflicted with doubt, then look at length in the mirror of yourself"; "the strongest of all are they who pardon"; "in the desert is an oasis that is the hope of him who has lost his way."

At this point, the disrespectful thought occurs that the seikh is a somewhat tendentious pontificator. But elsewhere there is a curiously timeless relevance and freshness — these words could have been written at any point over the past 2,000 years — The Sunday Times.

Penelope Lively

The illusion of digital

By Jean-Claude Elias

MORE THAN ever, we are surrounded by digital devices like computers, sophisticated communications networks and satellite channels to name only a few. The advantages of the digital technology have become so obvious to us, so indisputable that comparing digital and analog has become nonsense. And yet...

Whereas in many cases digital technology is not only the best but also the only possible solution, like computers for instance, it does make sense to think twice before going for digital in others. At least it is worth knowing that digital is not necessarily the smoothest, fastest, more reliable solution.

Digital is accurate and provides an excellent method for long-time conservation of data, whatever the format — text, sound, still images, movies, and so forth. Audio CDs for example are said to remain in perfect condition for "a lifetime and more." On the other hand digitised photographs take an unusual amount of space to be stored if one is processing colour shots at high resolution. Even a laser disc won't store more than say ten or twelve such photographs. Unless one is willing to compromise by reducing the resolution (the sharpness) and the number of colours, which of course defeats the purpose.

Those in charge of the famous French Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the library that holds about 10 million publications, have started a few years ago to digitise them in order to preserve them for future generations. In spite of advanced technical means, they have so far been able to process about 100,000 books. It may take them another 300 years to finish the job.

Ever tried to download a photograph or a large computer file via the Internet? Downloading consists of "bringing" data over the telephone line and saving it on the computer's hard disk. The time to download depends naturally on the actual size of the file. As an example, a 4-MB file

chip talk



will take about one hour with the current state of the technology. Such a file wouldn't even represent a colour picture but a black and white one.

Apart from low performance and data size, the complexity of the technology is becoming a problem in itself and is drastically reducing the overall reliability one is entitled to expect from it. An information technology specialist talking about Intel's Pentium chip — the main microprocessor in personal computers — explained that with the equivalence of 3,000,000 transistors inside the chip, it is technically impossible to perform a complete test of all the possible combinations of the chip's processing patterns. The manufacturer can only test the known cases of utilisation of the microprocessor. Giving users the guarantee that the chip is absolutely flawless is something no manufacturer can or will do.

Have you noticed how analog clocks are in fashion again? In the seventies and eighties, virtually all car manufacturers would include a digital clock in their products. Now most of them have come back to the more traditional model. The example may seem unimportant compared to computers and satellite communications. It is nevertheless a clear indication that digital is not necessarily and not systematically superior to analog.

Running for cover

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen



RUNNING FOR cover is something that most of us go through quite often. It is something that we can do both because of an insecurity about what the future may bring and because of a desire to escape from the mounting responsibilities that we face day in and day out. For some, it just feels good to know that one can seek shelter under the shadow of something bigger than us when the need arises.

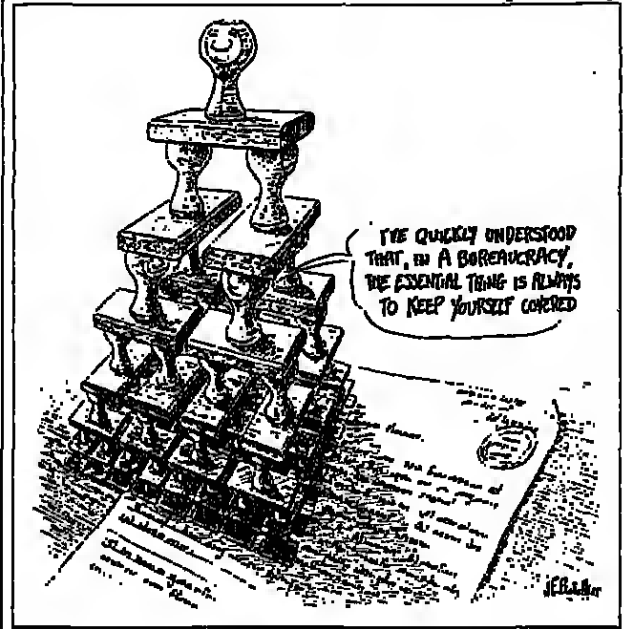
The down side of this is the knowledge that there will always be someone to look after us. Add to this that the notion of a guaranteed security can also tend towards a horrible state of cowardice and apathy.

Unfortunately, most people we know have got used to this abstract idea of safety under layers of protection that they have begun to cause great pain to others who are unprotected, this by relishing the power that this abstraction provides them with.

This happens when we are made to bounce between these layers nearly every single day of our lives.

This also happens everytime we attempt to get any kind of paperwork completed, in any government department, we hop back and forth from one clerk to another with a file in hand for the sole purpose of collecting signatures.

We get it initialled from one guy in the public room on the ground floor. We then get it signed from the officer in a room on the third floor. Later we hop to get another signature from an accountant in the basement. Afterwards, we go back up to the fourth floor to get that double checked, or scribbled over, whichever tickles your fancy.



more. Eventually, we go to a big boss — but isn't everyone — who tells us that we are missing a scribble on pages three and five.

But why does this happen? Is it because the law says that you need to have thirteen signatures in your file if it is to be processed properly? Is it because the law obliges you to deal with such people? Or is it that the more signatures you collect the better are your chances of getting something done? Is it that people cannot accept responsibility for papers they sign unless others provide the necessary cover first? Or is it that civil servants are just too apathetic to care about the feelings of other people?

This kind of thing happens everywhere. It happens at the Income Tax Department. It happens at the Land Registration Department. It happens at the Vehicles and Drivers Licensing Department. It happens at the municipalities and at the local councils.

To be able to get a clear idea about this, try to get a site plan for a plot of land from a local directorate, itself another long word which can easily serve as a synonym for anguish, stress, and pain. Having gone through this little exercise, the idea of hopping is clearly revealed.

If we had hoped that young people had over the past year found a voice with which to speak whatever is on their minds, has this been lost now amidst the proclamations of the old-newcomers? Let us pray that it hasn't.

In any case, those masters of bureaucracy who still hide in crumbling office blocks have to be made to see the light because while this society is packed with grumpy, old and space-consuming men and women eager not to lose their privileges, there are, in return, plenty of helpful and pure people in the civil service ready and willing to lend a helping hand to those in need.

At the end of the day, all is needed to sort this mess out is turn the light on to get a clearer picture of what goes on behind the thick walls and the closed doors of the civil service.

And once we decide that to modernise what goes on there is what we want, the courage to do so is what we must pray for. But given that the existing structures are so interwoven, just how easy will it be to break them up is sufficient to confound anybody's good sense of judgement.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, March 27, 1997

7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
8:00	World Echo (Doc.)
8:30	Side Effects
9:10	Tycoons (Doc.)
10:00	News In English
10:25	Hot Shots
11:15	Sisters

Monday, March 31, 1997

2:00	Holy Koran	2:00	Holy Koran
2:08	Ovide & The Gang	2:05	Captain Planet (Cartoon)
2:30	Raw Toonage	2:30	Flintstones
2:45	Curiosity Show	3:00	French Programmes
3:10	They Came From Outer Space	4:00	Nature's Inventions
4:00	N.B.A. Basketball	4:25	Deep Water Haven
5:00	Out Of This World	4:50	Ocean Girl (New Series)
5:30	French Programmes	5:00	Extra Dimensions (Doc.)
7:30	News Headlines	6:00	French Programmes
7:35	Parenthood	7:30	News Headlines
8:00	Cinema, Cinema, Cinema	7:35	One Foot In The Grave
8:30	The American Chart Show	8:00	Discover Magazine (Doc.)
9:10	Kung Fu-The Legend Continues	8:30	Murder She Wrote
10:00	News In English	9:10	Highlander
10:25	Feature Film — Between The Darkness & The Dawn	10:00	News In English
	Starring: Elizabeth Montgomery & James Naughton	10:25	Under Suspicion
12:00	Taratata	11:00	Middle March

Friday, March 28, 1997

2:00	Holy Koran	2:00	Holy Koran
2:08	The Mask	2:08	Budgie — The Little Helicopter
2:30	Flintstones	2:30	Grimmy
3:00	See How They Grow	3:00	French Programmes
3:15	French Programme	4:00	Super Sport Follies
4:00	Crystal Maze	4:30	Dog House
5:00	News Flash	5:00	Preserving For The Taste Of It
5:01	Science & Space Encyclopedia	5:15	Album Show
5:30	French Programmes	6:00	French Programme
7:30	News Headlines	7:30	News Headlines
7:35	America's Funniest Home Videos	7:35	The Office
8:00	The Health Show	8:00	Super Stars Of Action
8:30	Hawkeye	8:30	Encounter
9:10	Frontline (Doc.)	9:10	The Nature of Things
10:00	News In English	10:00	News In English
10:25	Feature Film — Ordeal In The Arctic	10:25	Snowy River
	Starring: Richard Chamberlain & Catherine Mary Stewart	11:15	Mission Impossible

Saturday, March 29, 1997

2:00	Holy Koran	2:00	Holy Koran
2:08	Adventure of Mickey & Donald	2:08	Flintstones
2:30	Moomins	2:30	Adventures On Rainbow Pond
3:00	French Programme	3:00	French Programme
4:00	Gillette (Sports)	4:00	America's Funniest People
4:30	Innovation (Doc.)	4:25	Escape from Jupiter
5:00	Tilt 23.5	4:50	Challenge (Doc.)
5:25	Blue Healers	5:15	Border Town
6:00	French Programme	6:00	French Programmes
7:30	News Headlines	7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Hanging With Mr. Cooper	7:35	Grace Under Fire
8:00	Magazine - 01 (Doc.)	8:00	Soldier's Diary
8:30	Prism	8:30	Challenges
9:10	Time Trax	9:10	Spencer For Hire
10:00	News In English	10:00	News In English
10:25	MaeGyver	10:25	Cobra
11:00	Feature Film — A Red Wind	11:00	Hart To Hart
	Starring: Lisa Hartman		

Sunday, March 30, 1997

2:00	Holy Koran	2:00	Holy Koran
2:08	Jonny Quest	2:08	Flintstones
2:30	Problem Child	2:30	Adventures On Rainbow Pond
3:00	French Programme	3:00	French Programme
4:00	Global Family (Doc.)	4:00	America's Funniest People
4:25	Energy Express	4:25	Escape from Jupiter
4:50	Our World, Their World	4:50	Challenge (Doc.)
5:15	Black Water - Big Fish	5:15	Border Town
6:00	French Programmes	6:00	French Programmes
		7:30	News Headlines
		7:35	Grace Under Fire
		8:00	Soldier's Diary
		8:30	Challenges
		9:10	Spencer For Hire
		10:00	News In English
		10:25	Cobra
		11:00	Hart To Hart

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shuqair

AMAZING FACTS

- ONE of the parachute-jumping fans from New York could perform 331 successive jumps within 24 hours only.
- THERE is a contract of leasing a piece of land in Ireland which is effective for a period of 10,000,000 years.
- IN ancient times, the Scottish skirt was five metres long.
- ONE of the English libraries lent a book to someone and could at last restore it from his inheritors after 335 years.
- A CANADIAN prepared a cake of 200 square feet and weighing 7,500 pounds. The preparation of the cake lasted for 714 hours.
- IN Pennsylvania there exists a jungle where a type of a wild strawberry tree ages 13,000 years.
- A YOUNG MAN from Iowa, U.S., built a 15-metre high tower using 23,000 playing cards.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- ** Don't keep me waiting.
La tada'nec antazir taweealan.
- ** Let me know when you decide.
Akhberni indama tassil ela qarar.
- ** I lay down my life for you.
Eami odah'hi behayati min ajlek.
- ** Leave me to myself.
Da'nec wa-sha'nec.
- ** Let it pass.
Da'al-amr yamurr besalam.
- ** I was on sick leave.
Kntt fee ejaza maradiya.
- ** He made light of my words.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What does Basrah mean in Arabic?
2. When was the first oil well dug in the world?
3. The colour of oil differs from one country to another. True or false?
4. A musician started composing pieces of music at the age of 5. Who was he?
5. What is the name of the country where the first university in the world was established?
6. When did the unity among the Arab emirates take place?
7. What is the most common surgery performed on people?

JOKES

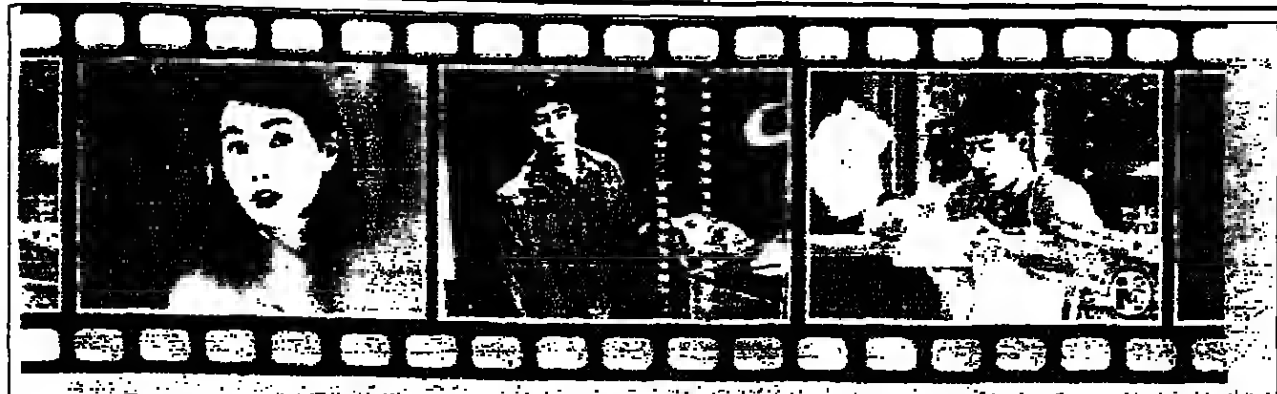
- A RICH MAN reached a doctor's clinic and the doctor said: "It's good you've come here at the right time." Patient: "Why doctor? Are you totally broke?"
- DURING the recent general elections one of the signs appearing on the walls read: VOTING FOR THIS MAN MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.
- BOY: "When I look at your pictures, I just stand up and wonder." ARTIST: "How I do it, you mean?" BOY: "Not at all — why you do it?"

PUZZLES

KEYWORDS

- Can you complete the crossword puzzle below and discover the keywords? The numbers in the corners of the squares correspond with the position of the letter in the 9-letter keyword across the centre of each puzzle.
- Each keyword comprises nine different letters, and any letters which are already inserted are not used in the keyword.

1	A	6	5		Y	0	4	3
3		2		A	6		P	9
I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
L		I		7		A	2	
7	V	7	8		I		A	8



Scenes from Comrades — 'what a lot of Hong Kong people are going through'

Suspense as filmmakers pray for a happy ending

By Francesca Buglioni
Dziadek

BERLIN — A question mark hangs over Hong Kong's film industry — third in scale only to Hollywood and Bombay-based "Bollywood" — as Britain prepares to relinquish control of the territory.

The fear is that with Beijing calling the shots from July 1, producers and directors will come under greater political control and Hong Kong will lose its attraction as a production centre.

"The handover is like death," says Yim Ho, whose film, *Kitchen*, was hailed as a poetic masterpiece at the recent Berlin Film Festival.

But not everyone shares Ho's pessimism. "Although this is the last year in which the British colony of Hong Kong will appear as an independent political entity," says festival director Moritz Hadeln, "as a separate national entity, we are confident that we will continue to see films made in Hong Kong, China, for a very long time after 1997."

He sees an industry "bursting with creativity." Last year, 116 films were produced in the territory — some financed by triads (Chinese criminal gangs) prepared to use violence to enforce punctual delivery.

The industry made its name with kung fu action films, as did actors such as Bruce Lee and Maggie

Hong Kong's dynamic film industry is unsure how it will be affected by the end of colonial rule. While some moviemakers fear the effects of China's political control others prefer to look to the prospects of a huge new market

Cheung. The latter was the first Asian performer to win the Berlin festival's prestigious Silver Bear award, in 1992, and she and China's Gong Li are the best-known Asian faces on the international film scene today.

The type of film made in Hong Kong is changing. About 65 per cent of production still consists of action movies, says Roger Lee, general manager of Harvest Crown, a subsidiary of Hong Kong's biggest production company, Golden Harvest Entertainment. "But the increasing box office popularity of non-action genres is changing the proportion towards 50-50."

Comrades (almost a love story), which was presented in Berlin, is typical of the new breed. It is the product of 35-year-old Peter Chan, an independent filmmaker who raises his own finance.

Starring Maggie Cheung, it traces the relationship of two mainland immigrants to Hong Kong over a 10-year period.

"The characters leave their homes to look for a

better life," explains Chan. "They come to Hong Kong, the most important transit point for Chinese people throughout the world, but it is never a home." Their final meeting is in New York, both still searching for a better life and both still homesick — though unsure about what constitutes home.

"It is exactly what a lot of Hong Kong people — who, under the pressure of (the handover in) 1997, emigrated to North America — are going through," he notes.

"The story is personal for me as a reflection of the lives of the Hong Kong natives of my generation — people like me who are trying to cope with a deadline. I always thought I wanted to leave, but now I really do not know where I want to be ultimately."

One wonders what will be the official Chinese attitude to such a story-line after the handover.

Many Hong Kong filmmakers, however, are more interested in the possibility of China opening up its huge domestic market to

their products.

"So far, the Chinese have an incredible quota of only 10 foreign films a year, which includes Hollywood films as well as ours," says Harvest Crown's Roger Lee.

"We have been left guessing as to what the Chinese gatekeepers hold in store for us. I cannot even make an educated guess. In any case, we have always survived on our own with no major financial backing from the state. Life goes on."

This inventive, never-say-die Hong Kong philosophy was best illustrated in Berlin by Viva Erotica, filmmaker Derek Yee's satirical look at people in his profession trying to keep their pride while forced for financial reasons to make soft-porn movies.

The film has an "adults only" rating yet is regarded as good enough to be considered in international competitions. Thus, like the people he lampoons, Yee succeeds in both maintaining his integrity and making money.

"All directors in Hong Kong have to face the conflict between the commercial side and the artistic," Yee explained in Berlin.

"And as the market for Hong Kong movies is shrinking, in the face of Hollywood's onslaught, we have to concentrate on the commercial. If we don't want to compromise with the studios, we cannot make a film" — Gemini News.

Film on life of Pakistan's founder attracts controversy

By Amir Zia
Reuters

KARACHI — British actor Christopher Lee, best known for portraying Count Dracula, steps out of the old Dakota plane that brought Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah to Karachi in 1947.

He waves, just as Jinnah did 50 years ago. The resemblance is uncanny. Pakistanis in the production unit of the first full-length feature film on Jinnah's life cheer and clap. "Lee is great. He looks exactly like Quaid-i-Azam (Great Leader)," said Mohsin Akhter, one of the Pakistani-British financiers of the film.

The Jinnah tribute is being produced in Pakistan's golden jubilee year, a half-century after the nation was carved from British India amid the bloodstained upheaval of partition. State-run Pakistan Television, banks and individual Pakistanis are among other investors in the project, which has a modest budget of \$5 million (\$8 million).

After appearing in more than 250 films, Lee has cast aside horror movie roles to take on that of Jinnah, revered by millions of Pakistanis for his part in creating their country.

"It is an enormous challenge, a great responsibility and indeed an honour to play the role of Quaid-i-Azam," Lee, 74, told Reuters in an interview. "I have read everything which I could read and watched every thing I could watch on Jinnah."

Controversy over casting, script

But the film about Pakistan's founding father has run into controversy, with some local newspapers attacking the producers for alleged casting errors and a fanciful script.

"The problem with Christopher Lee is that he is known for his role of Dracula," says Imran Aslam, editor of the English-language daily *The News*, which has spearheaded the media campaign against the Jinnah film project.

"A man who has played negative roles all his life, what was the need to cast him in the role of founder of Pakistan?"

Lee has little time for this sort of criticism.

"What do you mean by negative roles? I don't play negative roles. I play people. Some of them are positive and some of them negative... I have played many parts and this is the one which is probably the most important for me as an actor."

"There is absolutely no relevance between what I played in the past or what I am playing in this particular film. I am attempting to paint a portrait of a much-maligned and misunderstood man," Lee said.

Indian film star challenged

Aslam also criticises the choice of Indian film-star Shashi Kapoor in the east and says the script tramples on Muslim religious feelings.

"They have touched religion unnecessarily. Jinnah has been shown in limbo. Limbo is purgatory. It is part of the Koran," he said.

Aslam said that originally Kapoor was to play the Angel Gabriel, though this character was subsequently changed to a narrator able to travel through time, taking Jinnah with him.

"There appears no artistic device in it. They are hurting religious sensitivities," he said.



Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah

Film meant to be tribute to Jinnah

The film's executive producer, Akbar Ahmad, said Gabriel was not in the film, which he said contained no anti-Jinnah remarks.

"It is a tribute to Jinnah. We want to show it to the world so that it can appreciate him for the strength of his character, integrity and historical achievements — and also as a human so that people can feel him," Ahmad said.

He said the fuss had been stirred "by a disgruntled actor who is a journalist because he was not taken for Jinnah's role."

Aslam, who auditioned for the part, dismisses the charge and said the film producers were trying to trivialise the issue.

"We say that if the Pakistan government is involved in this project on any level, specially in giving money, then we think there should be accountability."

"It appears that the government has been taken for a ride. They did not know what was in the script until the newspaper took up the issue and now they have awakened a little."

Ahmad says the project had wholehearted government support, but no direct investment by the state. President Farooq Leghari has written to the governors of Punjab and Sindh provinces asking them to give full cooperation to the project.

"In the Indian and British press, the film is described as a propaganda movie for projecting Quaid-i-Azam as a hero. In Pakistan, a section of the press terms it as anti-Quaid. The two sides are levelling extreme opposite charges," Ahmad said.

"But being a historical figure as he was, the film on Jinnah's life is bound to be controversial," he added.

International films kick Hong Kong movies into a corner

By Peter Lim
Agence France Presse

HONG KONG — International films have delivered a painful kung fu kick to Hong Kong movies, slashing box office receipts for the martial arts-studded flicks by almost 50 per cent, according to a recent survey.

Receipts for locally-made films slumped to 634 million Hong Kong dollars (\$47.08 million) in 1996 from 1.24 billion Hong Kong dollars in 1992, the survey found.

But box office revenue for foreign films, mostly from Hollywood, soared 66 per cent over the same period, from 312 million Hong Kong dollars to 518 million Hong Kong dollars, according

to the survey conducted by video retail giant KPS Video Express.

The survey found 54 per cent of 206 movie-going respondents preferred foreign films to locally-produced features.

It also found 47 per cent of respondents ranked quality as the most important factor in their decision to watch a film, while 45 per cent said the choice of film available was the determining factor.

Screenings of popular films in Hong Kong regularly draw large queues waiting for tickets and advance bookings are often required.

Market share of foreign films, in terms of audience size, increased from 20.1 per cent in 1992 to 45 per cent in 1996, the survey

found.

In the golden days of the Hong Kong industry from 1986 to 1992, local films, especially action or kung fu movies, were in demand abroad, with buyers throwing money at any production starring big local names like Jackie Chan, Chow Yun-Fat, Jet Li, Leslie Cheung and Andy Lau.

Hong Kong produced more than 200 films a year during its heyday but last year turned out only 120 movies.

The industry was in the past so flush with money that triads, local organised crime syndicates, wanted to cash in, turning up on film sets and demanding protection money or sending death threats to stars who turned down film offers from them.

But demands for protection money have proven increasingly futile and a number of people have been arrested in recent years after producers called police to their film sets.

The drop in cinema attendance has seen Hong Kong cutting ticket prices one day a week in an effort to boost flagging audiences and the industry itself since Feb. 10.

Admission prices at all 98 theatres across the territory will be 30 Hong Kong dollars (\$3.90) every Tuesday instead of the usual price range of between 45 and 65 Hong Kong dollars.

Hong Kong becomes the first Asian city to follow the lead of the United States, Canada, France and Australia in discounting midweek tickets.

Sesame Street to finally come to China

By Graham Earnshaw
Reuters

SHANGHAI — The U.S. Children's show *Sesame Street* is finally coming to China after two years of delays caused by lack of a sponsor and questions over how to make it acceptable Chinese, organisers said.

Big Bird, one of the Street's best-loved characters, was on hand at a news conference recently to announce the start of auditions for key performers in the Chinese series, to be produced in conjunction with Shanghai Television.

Sesame Street is a production of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW), and has been on the air since 1968, teaching children around the world how to wash their hands and count to 10.

Big Bird made an early foray into China in 1981 for a television special in which he went in search of a Chinese phoenix with the help of a young girl.

Now, he will be back in early 1998, in a series of 130 half-hour shows for which sponsorship has been promised by General Electric Co. of the United States.

He will be joined by a couple of Chinese characters being created for the show including Puff Pig, a blustering vegetarian, said CTW Vice-President Gregory Gattas.

Bert and Ernie and the Cookie Monster will also make appearances with Mandarin Chinese voice-overs.

"This is a wonderful and special day for China's children," said the show's producer, Ye Chao.

"But our show will be somewhat different from the U.S. *Sesame Street*. We have done a lot of work talking to child educationalists and psychologists to produce a formula which suits the special characteristics of Chinese children," he said.

A local journalist asked if *Sesame Street* was not a continuation of a process in which China's children are becoming ever more enthralled by foreign cartoon characters.

"Many of the children's programmes coming into China have a somewhat negative impact on viewers, but in terms of producing our own programmes, we find we lack some of the desirable skills and knowledge," Mr. Ye said. "That is

why we are cooperating with CTW."

He stressed that the setting and characters in the Chinese *Sesame Street* would be entirely Chinese.

"We have held many meetings to consider the special needs and characteristics of Chinese children," he said.

About 60 per cent of the content will be locally produced with 40 per cent being selected from an international bank of *Sesame Street* material produced in a number of countries, including the United States.

"This will be a truly Chinese production," Mr. Gattas said. "It's not just *Sesame Street* done in the Chinese language."

The show will be broadcast every weekday evening to Shanghai TV's audience.

Women poets write of love behind veil of anonymity in Emirates

By Scheherazade Farmanzari
The Associated Press

DUBAI — Fatat Al Dubai feels she talks too openly of love and desire in her poems to sign them with her real name. She fears arousing the wrath of conservative Gulf society.

The poet — her pen name means "young woman of Dubai" — has even hidden her poetry from her family. But she has a wide audience among the young people of the tiny states of the United Arab Emirates.

"I have to remain anonymous, otherwise I won't be able to write how I feel," she said in an interview. "My poems are more reflections of how women feel. Our parents and families... disagree with poetry, especially written by a woman. They consider it a shame."

Fatat Dubai is not alone in her fears. Her poems were published in *The Female Poets Of The Emirates*, which includes 46 writers — all anonymous even though Arabs have traditionally used poetry to express the strongest emotions.

The women use colourful pseudonyms, often incorporating names of the tiny sheikhdoms along the Gulf. Among them "Smile Of Sharjah," "Daughter Of The Desert," "Dubai Princess" and "Abu Dhabi Nights."

For all the romantic names, the poems are hardly scandalous. They speak only figuratively of love and desire, their restraint reflecting social and religious pressures, especially when it concerns women.

In one of her more evocative poems, Fatat Dubai compares her dream love to a falcon, a bird prized for its speed and hunting skills:

"I have a partner whose pride I feel in my heart of hearts"

"And whose flirtation is hidden from everyone's eyes."

"He has a free spirit and is proud like a falcon"

"And comes from an ancestry that is noble."

Another poem is a little more daring by Gulf standards:

"I wish I were alone with him"

"And there was not a soul around."

That's as racy as she gets.

Others whose work is in the *Female Poets Of The Emirates* also speak in platonic terms. A poem by Layla Al Amiriya reads:

"The day you left"

"My tears poured like rain."

"But however it turns out"

"You'll always be locked in my chest."

Tahera Al Hashemi, whose short stories appear

Women poets use colourful pseudonyms, often incorporating names of the tiny sheikhdoms along the Gulf, among them 'Smile Of Sharjah,' 'Daughter Of The Desert,' 'Dubai Princess' and 'Abu Dhabi Nights'

under the pen name "Sara Al Nawaf," says that even though Emirates women write anonymously, they still censor themselves because of the restrained nature of Arab society.

"We convey our true feelings by using symbolism. It's up to the reader to interpret them," she said, wearing a loose thin black veil over her dark hair and a black robe with glittering gold-coloured hems.

Salha Ghabesh, a 36-year-old poet from the Emirate of Sharjah, said writers censor their own work out of respect for social norms under which women are supposed to be self-effacing. She said that those who want to write more freely sometimes use male pseudonyms.

Ghabesh uses her real name, but that is perhaps because most of her writings are about how women's lives are better for the "abaya" — the traditional head-to-toe cloak — or the "hijab" head scarf that Gulf women wear in public to reflect Islamic modesty.

"I deal with emotional issues that involve the Gulf woman and the wearing of the abaya. The abaya is an inherent part of our culture... our heritage and civilisation," said Ghabesh.

But she said a woman's dress should not be mistaken for her whole being.

"When we cover our heads with hijab, it doesn't mean we are covering our brains, our intelligence or feelings and thoughts," she said.

As for Fatat Dubai, she is happy to have poems published, even if readers don't know her name. She recalls shy friends who would jot a few lines of poetry on a piece of paper, then tear it up for fear of being discovered.

While retaining public anonymity, she recently revealed her real name to fellow poets. She's Fatima Al Hajj, 31 and unmarried, and has been writing poetry since high school. The revelation came at a writers convention in Abu Dhabi, the Emirates capital.

"They were all men," she said. "For the first time, they saw who Fatat Dubai was."

Doctors call for battle against spread of diabetes

By David Brough
Reuters

LISBON — Health authorities must step up prevention campaigns in order to tackle the growing incidence of diabetes around the world, doctors at a recent international conference said.

"Prevention is not a big enough issue in our societies," Professor Rudiger Landgraf, head of the Diabetes Centre at Munich University, said on the sidelines of the event in Lisbon.

"Children should be taught in schools how to eat healthily and the need to take exercise. Too much fat intake, too many proteins

and excessive alcohol consumption are very important in the development of Type 2 diabetes," he told Reuters.

"Prevention has to start at least 10 to 15 years before the outbreak of the disease," he added.

Diabetes is a common disease which occurs when cells in the pancreas known as islet cells fail to produce insulin properly. Insulin helps regulate blood sugar levels.

Type 1 diabetes tends to affect people under 20 while Type 2, which accounts for the bulk of cases of the disease, afflicts older people.

Type 1 can be triggered by other infections, the

progress of the baby in the womb, and may have a genetic link, doctors say. Type 2, afflicting more than 100 million people worldwide, is believed to be linked to diet, lifestyle and genes.

Dr. Harald Bergrem, a fellow of the diabetes secretariat of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Copenhagen, said diabetes was becoming more prevalent as economies developed.

"In Europe about 25 million people have diabetes. In 20 years time, at least double that number will have the disease," he told Reuters.

He said the increasing incidence of diabetes was linked to an aging population and bad dietary habits of people who consume too much alcohol and high-protein foods and not enough fruit and vegetables.

"The link between healthy eating when you're young and getting diabetes later in life is under-estimated," he said.

Dr. Bergrem said 34 of 50 member states of the WHO in Europe had implemented national plans to tackle diabetes, including prevention campaigns.

But he said authorities had to boost efforts to educate people about the need to

take exercise and eat a healthy diet in order to reduce the risk of obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Most people with Type 2 diabetes are obese, doctors say.

Dr. Landgraf said campaigns to prevent diabetes would conflict with the vested interests of powerful lobbies such as alcoholic drinks companies and the pharmaceutical industry.

"The alcoholic drinks industry has other interests than cultivators of (healthier) fruit and vegetables," he said.

"The state has an interest in products that deliver big tax revenues like alcohol," he added. "The pharmaceuticals industry is more interested in selling drugs than prevention."

Doctors at the conference said society under-estimated the seriousness of diabetes because the disease could be managed through educating patients and managing blood sugar levels in their blood.

People failed to realise the high cost of complications from diabetes such as eye disease, strokes, neurological problems and amputations, they said.

The treatment of patients was inadequate in developing countries where many had no access to insulin, they said.

'Ulcer pill could save mothers'

LONDON (R) — A drug originally designed to treat ulcers could help stop bleeding after delivery and has the potential to save 250,000 lives a year, a British researcher said.

The drug, Misoprostol, was designed to counteract stomach damage caused by painkillers. It is also used to induce abortion.

Dr. Hazim Al Refaey, an obstetrician at University College Hospital, London, tested Misoprostol pills on 250 women.

They worked just as well in preventing haemorrhage after delivery as did the standard treatment, an injection of the drug Syntometrine, he reported in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Syntometrine, given routinely after birth in Europe and North America, can cause nausea and raise

blood pressure. But Misoprostol has no side-effects and does not have to be injected, Dr. Refaey said.

In addition, Misoprostol is more stable than Syntometrine and can be used more widely in countries with hot climates. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that, in countries that lack such a drug, 250,000 women die every year from haemorrhage after birth.

"In this pill we seem to have an easy-to-administer, easy-to-store and safe-to-take precaution against haemorrhage following childbirth," Dr. Refaey said in a statement.

"It could save the lives of hundreds of thousands of women around the world every year."

He said WHO was setting up a global trial of Misoprostol.

Tuberculosis breakthrough could save millions of lives — WHO

By Tani Freedman
Agence France Presse

GENEVA — The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced Tuesday a "breakthrough" in tuberculosis control that it says could save 10 million lives in the next decade, shrinking a scourge that hits the world's poorest nations hardest.

The development, known as DOTS, for directly observed treatment short-course, "is the biggest health breakthrough of this decade, in terms of the lives we will be able to save," Hiroshi Nakajima, director-general of the WHO said in a statement.

"We anticipate that at least 10 million lives from tuberculosis will be prevented in the next ten years with the introduction and extensive use of the DOTS strategy."

About eight million people last year came down with tuberculosis, which is the leading infectious killer of youth and adults. Someone in the world is infected with tuberculosis (TB) every second, according to the world health body.

Some 95 per cent of cases are in Third World countries.

The DOTS strategy works by having health workers supervise patients' intake of four powerful medicines over six to eight months.

One of the most difficult problems hindering TB control has been that sufferers often fail to continue their course of treatment once they feel better, which has led to the emergence of multi-drug resistant strains of the disease.

Such strains, which have broken out recently in London, New York and Milan, are over a hundred times more expensive to treat and almost impossible to cure, the WHO said.

The total cost of using the DOTS strategy is around \$100 per patient in most poor countries.

The WHO said there was compelling evidence that where DOTS is used, cure rates nearly double and the epidemic can be eventually sent into reverse.

Thirteen countries, including China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines account for nearly 75 per cent of the

world's TB cases.

China has over one million new cases and 250,000 deaths annually from tuberculosis.

The country of 1.2 billion people is also one of the biggest success stories of the DOTS strategy which has been implemented in areas reaching nearly half the population and where the cure rate is 93 per cent.

In villages where an effective DOTS programme is working, TB is no longer dreaded, according to the WHO.

Those who become sick know they can become cured and within weeks of starting treatment most are back to work.

More than two million Indians are infected with tuberculosis each year, which claims the lives of 500,000 victims.

A DOTS strategy is being applied in pilot areas covering over 12 million people. In these regions, staff receive training and watch their patients take and swallow their drugs.

The result is that the drop-out rate from treatment has plummeted and tuberculosis is cured in four out of every five

patients.

In Thailand, tuberculosis piggybacking on the explosive spread of AIDS has become a time-bomb, the WHO said. There are roughly 100,000 new cases of TB a year and HIV positive victims are 30 times more likely to develop the disease than those testing negative.

In the Philippines, where an estimated one in 40 has a chance of becoming infected each year, tuberculosis will cast a pall over the country's current economic boom unless steps are taken to improve TB control, the WHO said.

Brazil, Mexico, Russia and Zaire also have large tuberculosis infected populations.

"The TB epidemic will continue to kill more people each year, and the TB bacilli will grow more resistant to drugs, unless we move quickly to put the DOTS strategy into use in every country," Mr. Nakajima said.

Doctors can get rid of 4 tropical diseases

By Sonali Paul
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Developing countries should be able to get rid of four major tropical diseases within 10 years with investments in cheap drugs and new insecticides, medical researchers said.

Millions of people are at risk from the four diseases, leprosy, river blindness, chagas disease and lymphatic filariasis, according to a report by the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR).

The public health scourges can be controlled thanks to treatments developed over the last 20 years, insect-killing bacteria, simple insecticides, and new mapping programmes to track diseases, it said.

"It's quite remarkable we really have now the tools for elimination of four major diseases in the world," said Tore Godal, director of TDR, funded by the World Bank, World Health Organisation, and United Nations Development Programme.

"The main message is that to invest in this kind of research gives you very good value for money, though it takes a long time," he said in a telephone interview from Geneva.

The stigma from these diseases is more damaging than their health effects. "They don't kill. They throw people out of society into the gutters," Mr. Godal said, adding that in India, girls with leprosy are typically thrown out of school.

The TDR report estimated it would cost \$370 million over the next four years to

help eliminate leprosy, a severely deforming disease caused by bacteria.

More than half a million new leprosy cases are reported annually in 60 countries in South East Asia, Africa and Latin America, according to WHO. The report said a treatment involving three drugs "is able to cure all patients."

Lymphatic filariasis, the most widespread of the four illnesses targeted, has been successfully treated with the drug Ivermectin combined with another drug.

The disease, which affects 120 million people in 73 tropical and subtropical countries, is passed on by mosquitoes infected with worm larvae that block the lymphatic system, grossly enlarging legs and genitals, and damaging lungs.

Ivermectin has also been effective against river blindness, which affects 18 million people mainly in Africa. The drug kills larvae released by adult worms under the skin, but scientists are still looking for ways to kill the adult worms. The parasites are transmitted to humans by blackflies.

Chagas disease, which kills about 45,000 people a year in Latin America, is spread to humans by a bloodsucking insect that lives in cracks in the walls of low-quality homes. The disease can now be treated for just 5 cents per person.

Instead of spraying insecticides to get rid of the carrier bugs, scientists have developed a latex-based paint with insecticides that is effective for two years. A new fumigant is also being tested in Argentina.

Liver drug found ineffective in treating rare disease

BOSTON (R) — A drug commonly used as a treatment for a severe liver disease does not work, according to a new study in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The drug ursodiol, sold under the brand name Actigall by Ciba-Geigy AG, has been shown to help patients suffering from a liver condition known as primary biliary cirrhosis.

But doctors have also been using it to treat primary sclerosing cholangitis, a rare condition that narrows all of the tubes that carry bile from the liver to the gall bladder and the intestine.

Researchers had hoped that ursodiol would be effective against primary sclerosing cholangitis because it seems to be similar in some ways to primary biliary cirrhosis.

But in six years of tests in which 51 volunteers were given the drug and 51 were given a placebo, the people in both groups fared equally well. Both were just as likely to die, require a liver transplant or have their condition get measurably worse.

In an editorial in the medical magazine, Dr. Marshall Kaplan of Tufts-New England Medical Centre in Boston said the findings "will be profoundly disappointing to patients and physicians."

The team that did the study, led by Dr. Keith Lindor of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, said the drug may not have appeared to work because the patients were too sick when they first got it.

But it would be "very difficult" to study its effects on "less-ill volunteers because most patients who are found to have primary sclerosing cholangitis are beyond the early stages of the disease when they are first diagnosed. In addition, the volunteers would have to take the drug or a placebo for years."

Vitamin C lack linked to heart attacks

LONDON (R) — Vitamin C may be important in protecting against heart attacks, Finnish researchers reported.

Men deficient in the vitamin were more than three times more likely to have a heart attack, they said.

Jukka Salonen and colleagues at the University of Kuopio studied 1,600 men aged between 42 and 60 from eastern Finland, where people tend not to absorb much Vitamin C and where deaths from heart disease were common.

All the men were free of heart disease at the start of the study. Between 1984 and 1992, 70 of the men had heart attacks.

They found that 91 of the men had Vitamin C deficiency and of them 12, or 13 per cent, suffered a heart attack.

Of the 1,500 men who did not have a Vitamin C deficiency, only 58, or just under four per cent, had heart attacks.

"Vitamin C deficiency ... is a risk factor for coronary heart disease," they concluded.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant — it helps to prevent chemical reactions in the body that can cause heart disease and perhaps cancer as well. When blood fats oxidise in a process similar to iron rusting, they can harden and block arteries.

But when Dr. Salonen's group did a smaller study to see if Vitamin C supplements would help, they found little effect.

Other studies have found similar results with supplements and some researchers say the entire fruit or vegetable containing such vitamins must be eaten for effects to be seen.

'Women in 40s should get yearly mammograms'

CHICAGO (R) — Women in their 40s should get yearly mammograms, not every other year as currently recommended by the American Cancer Society, a panel of experts hand-picked by the group said.

The panel of 50 experts, which met over the weekend in Chicago to decide the contentious issue, shortened the group's existing guideline that dates to 1983 after reviewing numerous studies and taking into account the technological improvements in mammography.

A spokeswoman for the American Cancer Society said the group's board of directors, in meetings in Atlanta from March 17 to 22, will likely approve the panel's recommendation, with the guideline then becoming the likely gold standard for doctors and consumers.

"We have been the pace-setters on guidelines, and we anticipate the American Medical Association and other groups will adopt our position," American Cancer Society spokeswoman Joann Schellenbach said.

The issue of how frequently women in their 40s should obtain mammograms produced a somewhat confusing recommendation in late January when a National Institutes of Health (NIH) panel in Washington declared that it was up to women to decide for themselves.

Ms. Schellenbach, who attended the workshops held over the weekend, said the American Cancer Society panel was "shocked" by the emphasis the NIH panel placed on the potential harm done by radiation exposure from more-frequent mammograms. She said there was no evidence that such radiation had ever backfired and actually caused breast cancer.

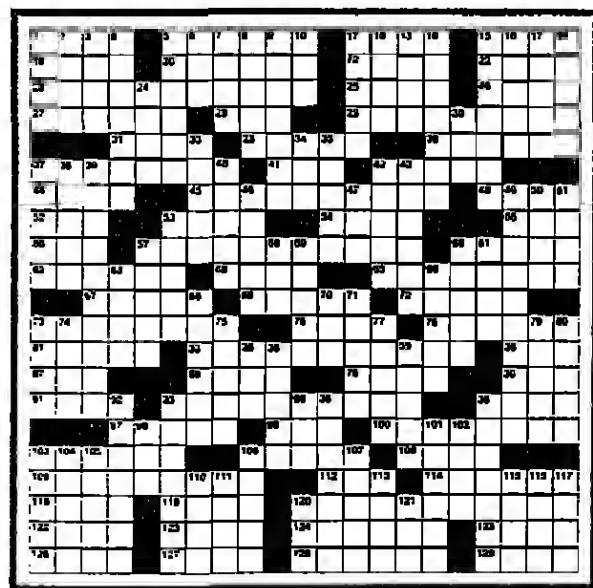
The latest panel also read the study data differently and determined it showed that younger women were at greater risk of developing faster-growing breast cancers.

"The current average two-year interval between screens may be too long for this age group and their faster-growing cancers," said panel member Marilyn Leitch, a surgical oncologist from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

HATCHET JOB
By Chuck Deedene

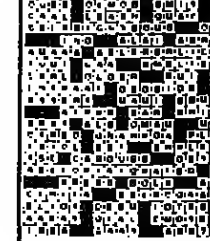
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Diagramless, 17x17
By Don Johnson

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Born loose decided to let last messy back on a lotta ticks with all of his unlucky numbers, and wine fifty thousand dollars.
2. Sad sack, tired of sleek thinking, got himself some wild new glad rags and changed his self-image.
3. Sneakbreaker was plenty lucky when his car had breakdown right at highway truck stop.
4. An ingenious slight slip of the lip may likely make you flip.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. Z A I E A Z A O E R G R P C M S A S O E T A E A S E. G E Z N I Y P U S N W C Y R W A L C S P E G A T A T W A S E L A T G M E L A H Z A S A O E G O A B C D E C Y L C W A E G O C Y N S P A S: — By K.C. Doyle
2. T V L N M E E R E M I N D M N E I O N T I M Y D T M T D G N N G D N N G T D M Z A N V Z E N E L I Z A Z O T Y N M. — By Barbara J. Rugg
3. S A O W N D Y W N Y D R E B U Y I T L E M T R T U R N W N N I T S D L E M W Y N N E N "Y A W N S O E S T Y A W N." — By B.J. Haddad
4. U T O R S P Y Z X T E G Y P T I A N R E G U L. U P N E X T I P S O L S P T S X A Y S L X T E L G Y P X T Z Y U G E I P. — By Frank N. Stein

Arafat lambasts U.S. veto, sees conspiracy against peace process

DHAKA (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was quoted Wednesday as criticising the U.S. veto of a Security Council condemnation of Israel.

Mr. Arafat also was quoted as saying "the Jewish lobby is working hard to jeopardise the peace process." Mr. Arafat, in Bangladesh to attend its silver jubilee celebrations, was interviewed by the Daily Star newspaper on Tuesday.

President Bill Clinton "personally understands our position in the Middle East peace process," he said. But the paper, without quoting Mr. Arafat directly, said he complained that the Clinton administration was not supporting him fully.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tracked down the Palestinian leader in Dhaka and persuaded him to return to the Middle East to meet her envoy, Dennis Ross, to try to end the impasse in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, U.S. officials said in Washington.

The administration had failed to reach Arafat for several days while he was travelling in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The Mideast negotiations plunged into a crisis after Israel withdrew its forces from less than expected territory in the occupied West Bank, and after a suicide bomber killed three people in a Tel Aviv cafe on Friday.

In the interview, the paper said Mr. Arafat expressed deep regret that the U.S. administration vetoed Friday's U.N. resolution condemning a new Israeli settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

"There can be no permanent peace in the Middle East as long as the problem of Jerusalem remains unresolved," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying.

"There is a conspiracy to destroy the peace process, but Israel must realise that there can be no durable peace in the Middle East unless the agreement reached between us is implemented fully," he was quoted as saying. "We

are not asking for the moon, but only for what has been agreed upon."

"The present crisis is the most serious one facing the Palestinian people in the recent past," Mr. Arafat said. "Israel must be pressured into honouring the peace agreement which was signed in the presence of President Clinton."

The crisis, he warned, "will have its ramifications globally if not resolved immediately."

In a speech at an independence rally Wednesday, Mr. Arafat said "no peace process is acceptable to us without the Holy City of Al Quds."

But in Bethlehem Wednesday he nevertheless went into action, leading his men personally and declaring to journalists and student leaders, "We're in control, we're always in control."

One of the march organisers who declined to give his name confirmed that a decision had been taken to hold down violent confrontations. Clashes also broke out Wednesday in the nearby village of Teqoa, which is under joint Israeli-Palestinian control. Four Palestinians, including a policeman, were injured by rubber bullets.

In Teqoa, Palestinian police also attempted briefly to hold back scores of pupils and students who pelted Israeli soldiers with stones on the way to school, but they pulled back when one of their members was hit by an Israeli rubber bullet, witnesses said.

Palestinian security officials "meanwhile warned that Israeli secret service agents caught operating in self-rule areas of the West

No let-up in violent clashes

(Continued from page 1)

with Palestinian demonstrations and try to avoid casualties.

The Palestinian security chief in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, was in Bethlehem on Wednesday trying to keep the Palestinian protest from getting out of hand.

More than 100 members of the elite preventive security force of Colonel Rajoub used metal barriers and four vans parked across the roadway to keep a march by some 300 Bethlehem University students from approaching Israeli army positions.

Col. Rajoub on Tuesday rejected Israeli demands his forces crack down on protesters as a condition for resuming peace talks, saying there could be no security cooperation with Israel until the political process is back on track.

But in Bethlehem Wednesday he nevertheless went into action, leading his men personally and declaring to journalists and student leaders, "We're in control, we're always in control."

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Palestinian security officials "meanwhile warned that Israeli secret service agents caught operating in self-rule areas of the West

Bank and Gaza Strip would be met by "an iron fist."

Israeli television reported Tuesday that following a suicide bombing last week in Tel Aviv and a recent drop in security cooperation between the Israeli government and Palestinian security, Israel's Shin Bet secret service had been given broader powers to act in Palestinian-controlled enclaves (see page 2).

In a statement faxed to news organisations and attributed to an unnamed "high-ranking Palestinian security official," the Palestinian National Authority said that if confirmed, the Israeli decision amounts to "an act of war."

"We warn against such a risky step and from our side we will strike with an iron fist anyone who tries to sabotage Palestinian national security," it said.

Ross in tough bid to jumpstart negotiations

(Continued from page 1)

Arafat before boarding an airplane to return home from a speech in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Last week, Ms. Albright credited the Palestinian leader with making a "100 per cent effort" to counter "terrorism." The praise stopped after the Tel Aviv bombing, for which the militant Hamas group claimed responsibility.

Now, Ms. Albright and other U.S. officials are talking about a need for a "red light" from Mr. Arafat.

In Washington earlier this week, officials said it was crucial to get the two sides talking again. "We won't be able to stabilise the situation until we have them back talking with each other," one official said.

Israeli political analysts said Mr. Ross faced a tall order as he did last year when — after a wave of violence claimed the lives of 80 Palestinians and Israelis — he mediated Israel's handover of most of

Hebron to self-rule.

"Ross is going to have to find a formula, like he has before," said Leslie Susser, senior writer of the Jerusalem Report magazine.

"It must be along the lines of the Palestinians making a very strong commitment to crack down on terror and the Israelis committing not to make any more unilateral moves on the peace front," he told Reuters.

Mr. Erekat said Palestinians did not expect Washington to halt its alliance with Israel, only that it ensure the "accurate" and "honest" implementation of the peace deals which Mr. Clinton had witnessed since 1993. "What we are asking the United States today is to honour the signature of President Bill Clinton. He signed on the agreement — not for a photo op," Mr. Erekat told Reuters.

Israeli officials expressed hope Mr. Ross could arrange an Arafat-Netanyahu summit to defuse what many see as

the worst crisis yet in the Israel-Palestinian peace process, but no one was predicting any quick breakthroughs.

While denying Israeli allegations he incited last week's bomb attack in Tel Aviv, Mr. Arafat has let the tensions brew on the ground as he worked on building up international pressure on Israel, and indirectly on the United States.

Despite Israeli demands he return to deal with the crisis, Mr. Arafat went ahead with a previously planned trip to Asia this week, visiting Sri Lanka and Bangladesh after an Islamic summit in Pakistan.

As well as meeting Mr. Ross in Rabat, Mr. Arafat will also attend a meeting of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in the Moroccan capital on Thursday that can be expected to provide a new dose of support for the Palestinian line.

Sanctions on Iraq as long as it takes to topple Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

the Iraqi News Agency.

His comments came just days after the first food arrived in Iraq under the U.N. oil-for-food agreement. Under the deal, Iraq can sell oil worth \$2 billion for an initial six-month period to buy food and medicine.

A Chinese ship delivered 13,000 tonnes of Thai rice to Iraq on Wednesday, the first large shipment since the oil-for-food deal went into force in December.

Baghdad Radio announced the SS Huang-Jang started unloading its cargo after docking at the Gulf port of Umm Qasr, which lies along the desert border with

Kuwait.

U.N. officials described the rice as the "first substantial" delivery since Dec. 10 when Iraq resumed oil exports for the first time in six years under the humanitarian deal. However, scores of food trucks carrying more than 1,500 tonnes of cooking oil, chick peas, white beans and salt have arrived from Turkey and Jordan in the last week.

More than 2.2 million tonnes of wheat flour, rice, sugar, tea, cooking oil, infant milk powder, and salt are to be imported for Iraq's 20 million people over six months under the oil-for-food deal, U.N. officials say.

But U.N. officials and diplomats did not

expect distribution to begin until April when there is enough rice, flour or some other commodity stockpiled in the country to serve all Iraqis.

The Iraqi government wants to begin distributing goods as they arrive.

Iraqis have welcomed the first arrivals as helping to ease the strain on their food budget, but said they also needed meat, chicken and fish and hoped the deliveries would cut inflation and boost their purchasing power.

Flour was selling for 400 dinars per kilogramme on Wednesday, up slightly from 350 dinars on Tuesday and down from 500 dinars on Monday.

while rice sold for 300 dinars per kilogramme, up 25 dinars from Tuesday.

The dinar hovered around 1,100 to the dollar on Wednesday after strengthening to around 1,000 to the dollar on Tuesday from 1,140 on Monday.

A Western diplomat cautioned against expecting dramatic long-term improvements. "These are artificial fluctuations, the result of speculation by people who have foodstocks and money," he said.

So far 45 humanitarian contracts have been approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee while more than 200 are pending.

GCC calls for reassessment

(Continued from page 1)

Sheikh Hamad also said "there is a definite change in the Iranian position towards the Gulf countries."

The conference's final statement said the GCC was "ready to work seriously to build confidence" with Iran.

It said the GCC had "welcomed the new positions put forward by the Iranian foreign minister" who toured Gulf countries last week.

The statement also pointed to "assurances" made by Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in a meeting Sunday with Saudi

Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Islamabad.

"We hope this new position will be accompanied by proper actions," as the GCC wants to improve its relations with Iran," said Sheikh Hamad.

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New report finds U.S., Singapore and Hong Kong most competitive economies

GENEVA (R) — The United States, Singapore and Hong Kong are the most competitive economies while Britain and Nordic nations are becoming more attractive to foreign business, outstripping Germany and France, a new report said Tuesday.

The report by the Lausanne International Institute for Management Development (IMD) put Britain 12th in the 46-country world competitiveness table with core European Union (EU) members. Germany and France lagged at 14th and 20th respectively.

Northern Europe, with reduced unemployment and strong growth, was regaining competitiveness and three Nordic countries — Finland, Norway and Denmark — ranked in the top seven ahead of Switzerland in eighth place.

Other EU countries in general lagged behind the Nordic nations because of their high taxes and inflexible labour markets. Japan's competitiveness was sliding, at 14th place in the

global list, while that of Ireland was booming at 15th. Italy was the least competitive of the Group of Seven economies at 35th place, lagging behind Turkey at 34th place.

The world's up-and-coming emerging markets were the least competitive according to the survey, with Russia at the bottom below South Africa, Poland, Venezuela, Columbia, India, Mexico, Indonesia, Greece, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The IMD, which publishes annually a "world competitiveness yearbook" based on official statistics and surveys among some 3,000 top business executives around the globe, said the report was only preliminary and gave no year-to-year comparisons.

The report has been widely used by private businesses to assess risk and make investment decisions.

The IMD says it assesses competitiveness through "analysis of the mechanisms leading to wealth creation in a nation" based

on eight different factors, among them domestic economic strength, internationalisation and government policies.

But many analysts challenge the concept of national competitiveness as being too nebulous to assess reliably.

Some economists say the word has become meaningless because countries do not compete in the same way as companies and international trade is not a zero-sum game.

The survey was gloomy on Germany's high cost of business, delays in corporate restructuring and rigid labour laws.

"Germany continues to muddle through a pattern of reforms that may take more time to implement than anticipated," it said.

But it offered hope on Switzerland's economic recession, saying a weakening Swiss franc would revive growth in 1997 and "a new sense of realism in the country should make it last."

IMF: Foreign investment to triple in Egypt in 1997

CAIRO (AFP) — Foreign investment in Egypt this year will triple in comparison with the previous year, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) official has forecast.

Arvin Subramanian, the IMF's representative in Cairo, told the official newspaper Al-Ahram that foreign investment will reach \$2.1 billion in the July 1996 to June 1997 financial year.

Last year foreign investment in Egypt came to \$650 million.

Foreign investment in projects will reach \$800 million while investments in financial instruments will account for another \$1.3 billion, Mr. Subramanian said.

During the first six months of this financial year, \$450 million in foreign investment went toward shares while \$200 million was used to buy treasury bonds.

During 1995/96, investment in projects reached \$600 million while investment in financial instruments came to only \$50 million.

In 1993/94, foreign investment was \$1.3 billion.

According to the IMF, inflation in Egypt was 6.3 per cent in 1996/97.

Exports excluding oil should come to \$1.9 billion and imports were expected to increase by 15 per cent over the previous financial year.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 26/03/97 19:26									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CND	ITL	NLG	SEK
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6610	0.6148	1.4848	124.05	1.5748	1683.70	1.9022	8.6990
GB Sterling	1.6265	2.7813	1.0000	2.3810	201.85	2.2358	2739.21	3.0844	9.2760
JP Yen	0.0081	1.3824	0.4852	1.1602	1.0000	1.1077	13.57	153.30	4.5851
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0027	0.3843	0.9888	1380.17	0.8152	11.28	3.5820	10.3620
FR Franc	0.1755	0.2945	0.1078	25.6712	21.73	0.2410	33.36	33.3600	100.00

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	18.00	18.75
Bony	18.00	18.75
UL Gas	205.00	207.00

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4411	0.1638	0.3908
KW Dinar	3.2978	5.5803	2.0287	4.8382
CY Pound	1.9742	3.3381	1.2132	2.8904

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	348.8	349.3
Platinum (oz)	372.5	373.5
CU (3 Months)	2356	2357
Lead (3 Months)	681	682

Currency Deposit Rates (Bld)						
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year	2 Year
USD	5.57	5.57	5.50	5.50	5.50	6.12
JPY	0.88	0.35	0.40	0.50	0.58	
FRF	3.20	3.28	3.30	3.38	3.44	
ITL	7.17	7.21	7.24	7.20	7.21	

Main Equity Indices							
Bourse	Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low	P/Cls
New York	DOW JONES	6588.04	-18.13	-0.26	6590.14	6586.33	6578.17
London	FT-SE 100	4299.3	28.8	0.67	4320.2	4261.1	4270.7
Paris	CAC 40	2848.73	24.48	0.93	2868.11	2818.2	2824.23

Critics say it's risky, unnecessary U.S. Federal Reserve tightens credit

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) Tuesday launched a preemptive strike on inflation, raising short-term interest rates in a move its critics denounced as both risky and unnecessary.

The Fed's policy-making Open Market Committee conformed to expectations and hiked the benchmark federal funds rate by a half-point to 5.5 per cent.

The increase will mean that short-term credit will become more expensive, although analysts have said its real impact on the overall economy will not be felt until the end of the year.

Just hours after the decision was announced, it was attacked by congressional Democrats and two highly influential business groups

as menacing jobs and growth.

The White House gave it a correct — but chilly — reception. After repeated hints by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, the committee finally pulled the trigger, citing "persistent strength in demand" that was heightening the risk of expansion-threatening "inflationary imbalances."

Mr. Greenspan and other prominent figures at the U.S. central bank have readily acknowledged that inflation — which in the last 12 months has been limited to 2.5 per cent, apart from the food and energy sectors — poses no immediate danger to the economy.

But they insist that it is the job of the Fed to take the long view and head off consumer price rises that could emerge six months or so in

the future.

Mr. Greenspan in congressional testimony last week attributed the unusual coincidence of near full employment and lackluster inflation to a reluctance by workers — worried about job security — to press employers for higher wages.

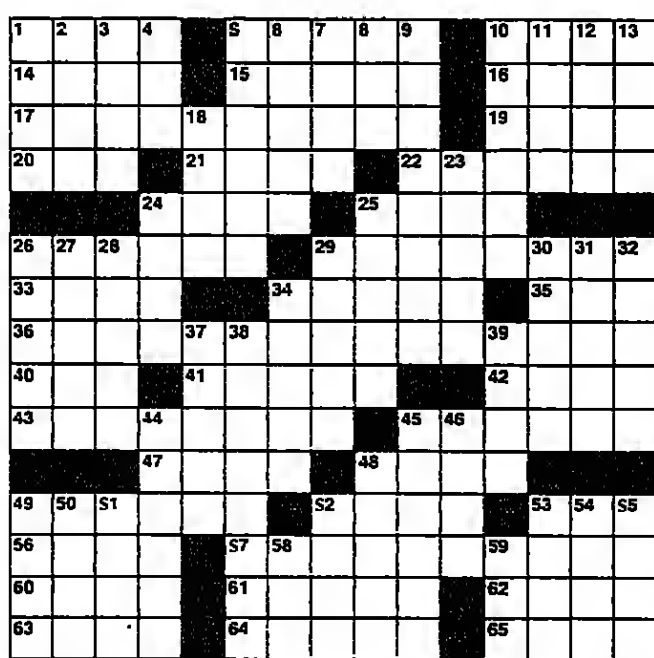
But such forbearance was not likely to last, he warned, adding that consumer demand had been "growing quite strongly in recent months" — the perfect ingredients for a spike in prices.

The Fed's prudence, however, earned it few plaudits among congressional Democrats and business groups, who said in effect that Mr. Greenspan and the board were unnecessarily squandering about inflation and indifferent to the need for growth.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Spar
- 5 Pasture
- 10 Type
- 14 Regarding
- 15 Accelerate sharply
- 16 Culture medium
- 17 Story by Hans Andersen
- 19 Small group
- 20 Layer
- 21 Hollow stem
- 22 Seldom
- 24 Kismet
- 25 — Bombeck
- 26 Biblical book
- 29 Policemen
- 33 Golf club
- 34 Scowl
- 35 Baby food
- 36 Mitt
- 40 Piece of land
- 41 Della of song
- 42 Arabian port
- 43 Raises the value of
- 45 Clergyman
- 47 Gossip
- 48 Rise sharply
- 49 NC river
- 52 Relative
- 53 A Gershwin
- 56 Tool for dressing wood
- 57 Decisive conflict
- 60 Control strap
- 61 Innocent
- 62 NC college
- 63 Trampled
- 64 Low card
- 65 Mother of Apollo



by Florence C. Adler



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DOWN

- 1 School subject, briefly
- 2 Tennis great
- 3 — gun
- 4 Author — Clancy
- 5 Welcomes
- 6 Civil War signature
- 7 Greedy
- 8 Bright star
- 9 Small finches
- 10 Petty ruler
- 11 British man
- 12 Marsh bird
- 13 NY city
- 18 Type of muffin
- 23 Included with
- 24 Tooth
- 25 Jagged
- 26 Gun
- 27 Mythical hunter
- 28 Calendar section
- 29 Curl
- 30 Lyric poem
- 31 Is enthusiastic
- 32 Exhausted
- 34 Flotilla
- 37 Bert's pal
- 38 Disloyal
- 39 Hideaway
- 44 Certain number
- 45 Silk fabric
- 46 Have status
- 48 Urbane
- 49 Section
- 50 German river
- 51 Pinza of opera
- 52 Arabian chieftain: var.
- 53 Inactive
- 54 Source
- 55 — Domini
- 58 Cheering word
- 59 State: abbr.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 1997

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A private discussion today with your superior can clear up several difficulties at this time if you are tactful. Avoid a depressing individual this evening who want to be in his or her own little world and alone.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Go out with a good friend today whom you haven't understood lately, and find out what is the difficulty. Don't do anything expensive tonight which could take away any funds you might need in the days ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Avoid a nagging fellow business associate today who only has on his or her mind how to proceed with some new project. Doing something thoughtful for your mate would be a wonderful idea at this time.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Adopt

a different attitude towards a fellow associate today and you will get more cooperation in the days ahead. Be sure to drive carefully while on the highway later this evening, thereby avoiding any difficulties.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A fellow associate can give you some great ideas today on how to improve your efficiency. Cut down on your expenses later this evening, however, don't be stingy in the way you treat others, especially your loved ones.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Remember to do something thoughtful for your mate today, thus improving your relationship. Help out a family friend later this evening if you are asked and this person will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

LIBRA: (September 23 to

October 22) Do anything at home today which will bring a greater harmony there. Entertain some good friends whom you loved ones are quite fond of tonight and thereby maintain harmony in your home at this time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Bring one of your special talents to the attention of a superior today and get excellent results. Set up a more sensible budget later this evening, which will allow you to have extra funds for the days ahead.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get advice from an expert today on how to improve your property, however, be sure to get several estimates before signing any contracts, thereby avoiding any difficulties. Tonight will be good for going out on the town.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You should not allow a private concern to keep you from enjoying with close friends later this evening. Use great care while driving on the highway or in motion, thereby avoiding any difficult situation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Avoid an acquaintance who is in a disagreeable mood today, so that you don't feel depressed. An understanding person you know can be most helpful to you at this time concerning business activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can gain the support of others easily today if you state your aims, especially where personal matters are concerned. Improve your health later this evening so that you will look and feel great for the days ahead.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is not a good day today to begin any new ventures, however, it is still a fine time to improve your present situation. Be considerate to your mate later this evening by doing some special activity which he or she likes.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you have made a promise today which you cannot keep this time, explain the situation clearly and you can get some extra time. Enjoy the company of close friends later this evening and have a wonderful time together.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A fellow associate may want to revise an agreement you have made today, however, it's important that you keep to your schedule and get your career activities completed. Later this evening is good to stay home with your mate.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Even though you may be busy today at your career activities, you'll still have time to check out an opportunity for some added income which is most desirable. This evening will be good to go out on the town with friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Although you are anxious to have a good time today, there are obligations you have to meet first, so get busy at them early and later relax with your loved ones. This is a good time to have guests in your home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't let some difficulties at home today interfere with important dealings in the business world. Be more cooperative with your fellow associates and thereby you can be more successful with their assistance.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Stop running around aimlessly today, sit down and labour out a practical plan of operation which can gain you recognition. Dealing fairly and squarely with others will bring you greater success in the days ahead.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day today to enjoy some recreation and put aside any monetary concerns you may have. This will improve your mood and relieve any difficulties which could exist with your loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Focus your energy today on improving the condition at home and establishing more harmony there. Postpone your personal desires until later this evening, and get as many career activities completed as you possibly can.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Being direct and to-the-point today will get you exactly what you want. If you want to enjoy a hobby later this evening, be sure to stay within your budget so that you will have funds available for emergency.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study your assets and liabilities today so that you know exactly where you stand financially in the days ahead. Avoid a friend who is cranky and stubborn, thereby you won't feel depressed over his or her attitude.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A new opportunity can be very profitable today if you keep away from an old difficulty which takes up too much of your valuable time. Later this evening will be good to meet with close friends for recreational activities.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

Saudi billionaire takes five per cent stake in Norwegian Cruise Line

DUBAI (AFP) — Saudi billionaire Prince Al Walid bin Talal said Wednesday he had agreed to buy a five per cent stake in Norwegian Cruise Line worth \$20 million.

In a statement sent by his office in Riyadh, the prince said he had "agreed to subscribe to new shares of Norwegian Cruise Line Holding ASA (NCL) for an amount of \$20 million equal to five per cent of the enlarged capital."

Norwegian Cruise Line is one of the world's largest leisure cruise companies with a total capacity of 10,000 passengers.

"I have long held an interest in the direction being taken by the cruise industry

and (spent) many months researching the investment options available," the prince said.

"I see in Norwegian Cruise Line strong management and an excellent potential and opportunity for growth in an area which is the fastest growing in the leisure industry," he said.

In a statement, the NCL chairman: "The recent deal with Kvaerner ASA and now the participation by his royal highness, leaves NCL with strong shareholders and a solid balance sheet. The pace of recovery is completed and NCL can now continue expansion of the company."

Prince Walid, a nephew of King Fahd, has substan-

tial investments in the leisure industry.

He announced Monday he was buying six of the eight hotels of the Princess chain for nearly \$600 million, excluding the two which cater to gamblers.

The Saudi billionaire already owns shares in the Four Seasons Regent and Fairmont Hotel chains, the Plaza Hotel in New York and the George V Hotel in Paris.

Earlier this month, he bought five per cent of the shares of Transworld Airlines (TWA), his first investment in the airline industry.

In a joint venture with pop singer Michael Jackson last year, the prince

Jordanian firms prepare goods to export to Iraq

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian companies will start exporting detergents worth \$26 million early next month to Iraq in line with the oil-for-food deal following a U.N. approval to supply Baghdad with humanitarian aid, business sources said Wednesday.

Ghassan Azar, chairman of the Modern Chemicals Company (MCC), said that his firm will start dispatching 4,000 tonnes of snaps to Iraq early next month following the United Nations approval.

He told the Jordan Times that the first shipment will leave Jordan in the first week of April. The remaining shipments will reach Baghdad over the coming

four months, he said.

"As soon as we receive the U.N. message of credit, expected in few days, we will start exporting our products to Iraq," Mr. Azar said.

The message is a guarantee from the U.N. to the companies that they will be paid by the U.N. and not by Iraq.

The MCC is one of 10 Jordanian companies which received a U.N. permission to export snaps and detergents to Iraq. Thirty-three firms are still awaiting the U.N. approval to supply Baghdad with \$94 million of food and medicine.

According to Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply officials, the approval for the 33 firms is expected early next month.

The oil-for-food agreement, concluded by Iraq and the U.N. in December, permits Iraq to export \$2 billion worth of oil to purchase food, medicine and other humanitarian aid for its 20 million citizens.

Mohamad Turk, from the United Detergents Industry Co., said that his firm is busy packing 8,000 tonnes of detergents, worth \$5 million, to export to Iraq in the coming two weeks.

Meanwhile, an industrial Iraqi team arrived in Jordan this week in discuss

with Jordanian industrialists means to strengthen trade ties between the two countries.

The team, headed by Adnan Qudsi head of Iraq's Industry Union, met with minister of trade and industry in an effort to increase the trade protocol between Jordan and Iraq.

The \$255 million protocol, which envisages supplying Iraq with food and humanitarian aid, is exempted from the six-year-old U.N. embargo.

Lending machines woo record numbers of Japanese into bankruptcy woe

TOKYO (AFP) — Automatic money-lending machines, the latest invention of Japanese consumer credit companies to woo borrowers, are under fire for the distress caused as bankruptcies soar to record highs.

"When we asked bankrupt individuals if they had taken loans using the machines, most of them said 'yes'," said Tatsuya Kimura, a lawyer who deals with personal debt problems.

Personal bankruptcies reached 50,615 in the first 11 months of 1996, beating the 50,000 mark in a year for the first time and compared to 43,414 for the whole of 1995, according to Supreme Court data.

Japanese individuals can seek protection from creditors if they declare themselves bankrupt.

being refused — a sensitive issue in a culture that strives to avoid embarrassment.

For an automatic loan, the potential borrower merely enters a small room housing the machine and sends by facsimile machine his or her identification and a pay slip or other document as evidence of a regular income.

If the application is successful, about 30 minutes later the machine issues a card, with which the borrower can draw money, usually up to 50,000 yen (\$415), from a cash dispenser next to the loan machine.

A spokesman for Acum Co. Ltd., which invented the automatic lending machine in 1993, said the system had proved more successful than expected as it had drawn in shy people who would not normally approach a staffed loan counter.

But Mr. Kimura, lobbying for the removal of the machines, disputes this being a benefit.

"Those machines enable people to draw money without the mental stress that one usually feels when asking for a loan. With them, people tend to push the limit," Mr. Kimura said.

Bankrupt individuals, he said, were often found to have had loans outstanding to "five or six companies" at the same time.

The lawyer said his group wrote to the finance ministry late last year calling for the removal of automatic lending machines.

"We will campaign for the removal of the machines until the last one disappears," Mr. Kimura said.

In an apparent response to the situation, the finance ministry has called on the six companies engaged in automatic lending to take "appropriate measures" to reduce the risk of people being driven into insolvency.

Daily Beat

EDF provides JD3.2 million to finance 591 projects

THE EMPLOYMENT and Development Fund (EDF) provided a total of JD 3.22 million in direct financing to 591 projects for individuals last year. Of the amount, JD2.48 million were disbursed by the end of 1996, EDF Director-General Ali Qubaa said, noting that the Amman governorate accounted for 37.6 per cent of the total financing. Irbid came in second place with 23.2 per cent and was followed by the governorate of Zarqa which accounted for 8.9 per cent. Aqaba took only 1.5 per cent of the EDF financing in 1996.

Mr. Qubaa detailed the performance of the fund last year by pointing out that the largest financing of 54.4 per cent was for service projects which provided 572 employment opportunities. The industrial sector accounted for 34.6 per cent of the financing and provided 514 jobs. Crafts and tourism took 6.2 per cent and 4.8 per cent of the financing respectively with the handicraft sector creating 95 employment opportunities.

Of the total number of projects financed, 18.4 per cent or 109 projects were for women who accounted for 18.2 per cent of the total financing. As such, men received 81.8 per cent of the EDF credits to finance 482 projects. All in all, the EDF opened 1,259 employment opportunities of which 1,039 jobs went for males and the remaining 220 jobs for females.

Noting that the EDF focuses on finding jobs to those holding educational qualifications and vocational experience, Mr. Qubaa said 37.7 per cent of the financing benefited holders of university degrees compared to 24.6 per cent to holders of Tawjihi certificates (high school education) and 13.6 per cent to holders of intermediate school certificates or Ibtidai level. Only 4.9 per cent of the financing went to holders of vocational certificates.

As to the job opportunities, the direct EDF financing provided employment to 362 persons with the Tawjihi degree, 361 persons with university degree and 203 persons with degrees from community colleges.

The EDF also helped in financing projects through other institutions such as the Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development and the General Unions of Voluntary Societies. The financing through these channels amounted to about JD1.5 million and benefited nearly 300 projects. (Al Dustour)

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"My day started out awful, but after 35 cups of coffee I hallucinated myself to a beach on Tahiti."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Hans Arnold and Mike Argibson

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROFUL

MEWNO

EDDOMO

SPOXEE

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: WHILE OXIDE MURMUR BOYISH
Answer: What the beer maker drank in the morning — HOME "BREW"

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 26/02/1997											
PRICE	12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
269,000	205,000	ABRAB BANK	14.0	1.37	9	220	61910	254.00	256.00	2.00	+
2,100	1,860	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	14	4172	7946	2.80	2.80	0.00	-
2,600	2,760	BANK OF JORDAN	10.1	0.00	2	16100	45000	2.80	2.80	0.00	-
2,210	1,880	MED. EAST INV. BK.	68.3	0.00	5	8800	9152	1.02	1.04	0.02	+
5,150	4,250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.6	2.88	32	20849	100115	4.88	4.98	0.08	+
2,950	2,440	JOR. EDWART BANK	19.7	0.00	10	1137	2101	2.72	2.72	0.00	-
1,090	840	JOR. GULF BANK	5.0	0.00	5	28500	23940	0.84	0.84	0.00	-
4,120	3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	16.4	0.00	10	1290	4931	2.64	3.83	1.19	+
2,800	1,380	ORION BK. SAV. INV.	8	0.00	3	600	1106	1.50	1.52	0.02	+
2,850	1,340	ROYAL AL-JORD. (BETTER)	8	11.54	1	250	325	1.34	1.30	-0.04	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 194.50	CHG: +0.46	92	62217	277707				
2,730	1,830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.5	10.26	15	5300	10917	1.92	1.95	0.03	+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 119.43	CHG: +0.16	15	5300	10917				
1,830	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	11	1064	5024	1.64	1.64	0.00	-
1,560	1,280	JOR. ELECTRICITY	9.5	6.90	1	815	222	2.26	2.26	0.00	-
1,400	1,200	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	12.0	5.28	3	1992	5282	2.65	2.65	0.00	-
2,700	2,470	ABRAB JEL. HOTELS	16.3	2.13	2	1040	4258	4.27	4.20	-0.07	-
1,540	1,060	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	20	6150	6899	1.08	1.07	-0.01	-
980	800	JORDANIAN INTL. BANK	26.7	0.00	1	1700	184	0.84	0.84	0.00	-
1,800	1,450	JOR. INTL. BANK	8.7	0.00	34	18645	11002	0.59	0.62	0.03	+
2,720	2,040	ABRAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	12.6	6.29	2	500	1595	2.22	3.28	1.06	+
1,210	960	SHARAH EDUCATION	8.2	6.40	8	9100	15900	1.75	1.72	-0.03	-
2,220	1,650	UNIFIED CO.	8.2	6.40	8	9100	15900	1.75	1.72	-0.03	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 104.03	CHG: -0.77	91	44442	52817				
2,720	2,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.2	2.82	19	2296	6407	2.57	3.55	0.98	+
2,500	2,110	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	25.1	0.08	1	250	815	2.26	2.26	0.00	-
6,100	4,950	ABRAB POTASH CO.	18.5	2.28	1	250	14845	6.00	6.10	0.10	+
10,400	8,120	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.2	7.94	7	486	4889	10.00	10.07	0.07	+
3,260	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COM. INC.	12.8	0.00	2	450	1096	2.42	2.44	0.02	+
7,950	6,420	JOR. WAREHOUSE	8.7	0.00	1	1236	8276	6.82	6.82	0.00	-
4,100	3,040	JOR. WAREHOUSE	20.3	5.42	19	5472	20220	2.69	3.69	1.00	+
1,820	1,380	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	8	0.00	6	2100	2548	1.19	1.22	0.03	+
6,550	4,250	DAR ALDIAH P. INV.	12.0	4.21	6	650	3808	4.78	4.75	-0.03	-
8,440	2,130	ABRAB ALUM. IND.	8.6	8.70	6	3230	4315	2.36	3.45	1.09	+
1,360	1,060	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	30	54750	31269	0.58	0.57	-0.01	-
1,400	1,060	ABRAB PAPER CORP. INV.	7.5	9.41	1	250	795	1.09	1.10	0.01	+
1,530	1,060	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1000	1209	1.05	1.09	0.04	+
1,020	850	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1000	1209	1.05	1.09	0.04	+
3,540	2,870	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	16	5900	5142	0.89	0.86	-0.03	-
1,150	740	JOR. ROYAL OIL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	14	0.14	0.14	0.00	-
1,170	640	STELCO	8	0.00	5	1100	675	0.64	0.61	-0.03	-
1,670	1,090	ABRAB PAPER CORP.	27.1	0.00	11	12300	19285	1.44	1.45	0.01	+
2,740	1,440	UNIV. HOUS. IND.	5.0	12.05	7	11700	19422	1.64	1.66	0.02	+
1,820	1,140	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	16.8	0.00	4	22979	44518	1.27	1.24	-0.03	-
1,370	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.4	0.00	8	1600	2240	0.92	0.90	-0.02	-
2,400	1,750	EL - ZAY READY WEAR	8	0.00	4	2900	7059	1.81	1.81	0.00	-
1,360	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	28.2	0.00	16	7500	9457	1.85	1.70	-0.15	-
1,470	930	UNION CH. & VEG.	23.6	0.00	1	250	940	0.97	0.96	-0.01	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 118.37	CHG: +0.69	222	155045	211249				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 152.72	CHG: +0.48	420	287004	551990				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 26/02/1997											
690	420	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	16.5	0.00	2	250	115	0.47	0.45	-0.02	-
790	480	JOR. TRADE FAC.	13.1	0.00	11	11550	5908	0.78	0.76	-0.02	-
990	740	JOR. PET. INV. CO. 751	8	0.00	7	10500	1995	0.69	0.69	0.00	-
850	680	UNION INV. 501	66.0	0.00	20	21700	3494	0.43	0.42	-0.01	-
840	270	ABRAB FVN. INVEST.	9	0.00	2	25000	25000	1.00	1.00	0.00	-
950	740	AL-SABAH INV. 751	8	0.00	18	53600	20576	0.82	0.82	0.00	-
950	840	AL-DARILAH 751	14.7	0.00	5	2400	1280	0.66	0.65	-0.01	-
1,050	850	UNIFIED FOR FVN. INV.	9	0.00	5	2500	1221	0.85	0.85	0.00	-
640	200	JOR. INDUS. INVEST-VECO	8	0.00	2	1000	225	0.22	0.22	0.00	-
740	510	ABRAB FOOD & MED.	8	0.00	3	1650	957	0.58	0.58	0.00	-
1,690	1,200	KATL. CHEMICALS	9	0.00	18	24550	11332	0.45	0.45	0.00	-
690	420	ABRAB INTL. INV. TRD.	8	0.00	4	1750	975	0.50	0.50	0.00	-
720	490	KATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	30	40500	19144	0.46	0.46	0.00	-
850	400	KATL. HOLY. IND. KANICO	8	0.00	6	8100	6076	0.74	0.75	0.01	+
990	720	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	9	6000	4068	0.94	0.93	-0.01	-
770	570	RAZI FARM 651	2	0.00	13	8444	2033	0.50	0.50	0.00	-
660	290	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	8	4500	1925	0.44	0.42	-0.02	-
1,010	760	INDS. CERAMIC	8	0.00	1	10000	7800	0.60	0.78	0.18	+
870	520	MED. EAST COMPLEX	9.4	0.00	76	516250	411435	0.77	0.80	0.03	+
GRAND TOTAL			244	765394	547540						

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Arab Clubs Basketball Championship

Al Jazireh beat Libya's Nasr, meet Tunisia's Ittihad in last match

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S Al Jazireh scored their first win at the 11th Arab Clubs Basketball Championship in Nabel, Tunisia when they beat Libya's Al Nasr 82-64 (135-30).

Al Jazireh conclude their participation after playing Tunisia's Al Ittihad in their last match of the competition Wednesday evening.

In other results, Tunisia's Al Wadi upset Algeria's Bofariq 75-66, and Tunisia's Al Mala'ib beat Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad 66-60.

In women's matches, Egyptian champions Al Ahli, whose only loss to Lebanese champions Homenetmen, beat Algeria's Hussein Dai 72-63. Tunisia's Hilal beat Safqsi 48-45 and Homenetmen turned their first half loss to a 61-58 win over hosts Al Mala'ib of Tunisia.

Al Jazireh are playing in the round deciding 9-16th

places in which they lost to Libya's Murouj 75-63.

Al Jazireh could not qualify for the quarterfinals after losing 67-65 (131-27) to Lebanon's Al Hikmah. 79-71 to Algeria's Bofariq and 92-60 to Tunisian champions Al Zahra'.

Jazireh's Husam Lutfi was top scorer in the first round with 97 points.

Despite their results, Arab Basketball Federation officials lauded Al Jazireh's participation and results as the team mainly includes under-22 players making their inaugural Arab Clubs Championship against teams with professional lineups.

Also playing for 9-16th places are Kuwait's Al Jahra', Algeria's Bina', and Lebanon's Al Hikmah.

Nine Arab countries are taking part in the event hosted by Al Mala'ib Al Nahli. The participating 16 men's teams had been divided into four groups with the two in each group moving to the quarterfinals to play for

8th places.

Teams include Al Mal'ab (Tunisia), Al Riyadi (Lebanon), Al Zahra' (Tunisia), Bofariq (Algeria), Zamalek (Egypt), Al Ittihad (Saudi Arabia), Al Wadi (Tunisia), Al Ittihad (Egypt), Ohud (Saudi Arabia).

Only six teams are taking part in the 7th Women's Championship. They include hosts Al Hilal, Al Safa' and Al Mala'ib of Tunisia, Egypt's Al Ahli, Hussein Dai of Algeria, and Lebanon's Homenetmen.

The championship organisers have allocated prizes for top scorer, best player, ideal team in addition to best three-point scorer.

In previous Arab Championships, Jordan's former First Division champions Al Ahli and reigning champs Al Orthodoxi represented Jordan but declined to participate this year citing preparations for the country's First Division Championship. Titleholders Al Orthodoxi,

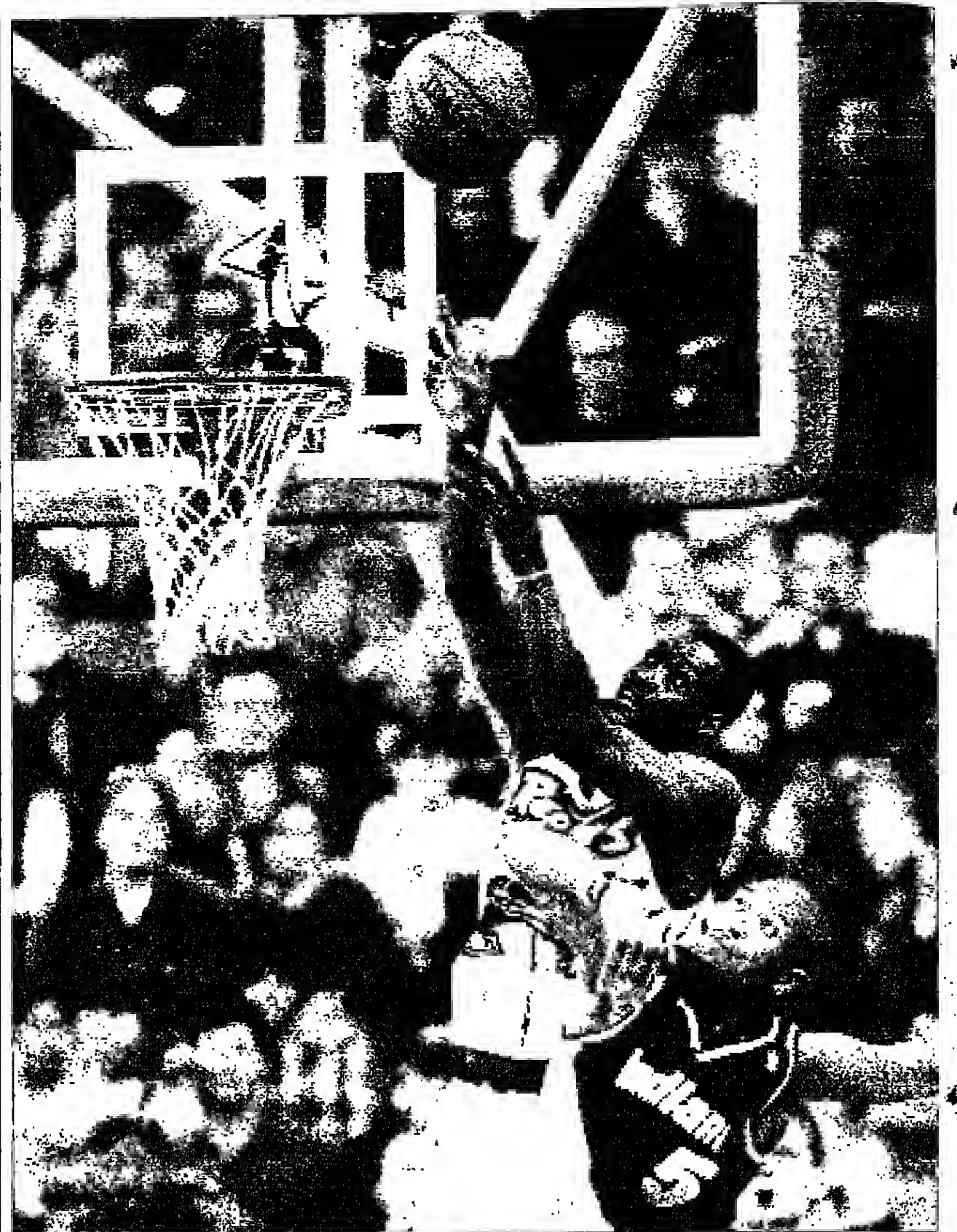
the country's undisputed basketball powerhouse from 1976-1989, have now won back the title in the past two seasons and repeating that is a top priority.

On the other hand, Al Ahli are hoping to regain their title which they won in 90, 92, 93 and 94 and have recruited a new coach who was in charge of the Russian team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Third-ranked Al Jazireh hope that the Arab championship will provide the team with a chance to test their readiness for the First Division Championship which they will try to win for the first time in their history.

They have become serious contenders for the Kingdom's First Division Championship during the past two years.

Last season, they beat Al Ahli and had a sure shot at second if not first place but later faltered in the final round.



Toronto Raptors' Carlos Rogers leaps over the top of Indiana Pacers' Jalen Rose to pull in a rebound during first half NBA action at the Skydome in Toronto. Indiana defeated Toronto 98-84 (Reuters photo)

Spurs, Cavs combine for second-lowest scoring game

SAN ANTONIO (RI) — Baskets were few and far between as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 64-59 in the second-lowest scoring game in modern NBA history on Tuesday.

Since the inception of the shot clock in 1954 only one game has featured fewer combined points and that was in 1955 — a 62-57 win by the Boston Celtics over the Milwaukee Hawks.

Vernon Maxwell and Avery Johnson scored 10 points apiece for the Spurs, who made just two field goals in the fourth quarter when San Antonio outscored Cleveland 11-10, eclipsing the record low of 23 combined points, set four times.

Tyrone Hill, who had two of Cleveland's three fourth-quarter buckets, led the Cavs with 16 points.

San Antonio went nearly eight minutes without scoring in the laughable fourth quarter. But during that time Cleveland could manage only a pair of layups by Hill.

The Spurs shot 37 per cent (25-for-67) from the field, while Cleveland missed 55 shots, going 25-for-80 — the lowest shooting percentage (31%) ever allowed by the Spurs. "I don't care if we score 23 points as long as the other team has 21," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said.

In Chicago, Steve Kerr and Michael Jordan scored 20 points each as the Bulls

edged the Dallas Mavericks 94-92.

Dennis Rodman grabbed 21 rebounds for the Bulls, who reached 60 wins. Chicago must go 10-3 in their last 13 games to reach 70 victories for the second successive season.

Michael Finley led Dallas, scoring 18 of his 28 points in the first half, which ended in a 52-52 tie. Dallas led 78-71 entering the fourth quarter, but Chicago went on a 15-2 tear, sparked by a pair of Kerr three-pointers.

In Atlanta, Steve Smith scored 27 points and Dikembe Mutombo added 24 and 12 rebounds to lead the Hawks to a 96-89 win over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Mookie Blaylock chipped in 11 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for Atlanta, winners of five in a row.

Isaiah Rider scored 22 points and Kenny Anderson had 15 and nine assists for Portland, which clinched a playoff berth despite the loss because the Sacramento Kings lost. The Trail Blazers have made the playoffs for the 15th consecutive season, the longest current streak in the NBA.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon poured in 39 points and Kevin Willis added 28 as the Rockets overcame the loss of Clyde Drexler to post a 112-103 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Drexler went down with a

sprained right ankle midway through the third quarter when he landed awkwardly.

Olajuwon also had 11 rebounds and six blocks and Willis grabbed 14 rebounds.

Stephen Marbury scored 16 points and dean Garrett and Sam Mitchell added 15 points apiece for Minnesota, losers of nine of its last 13 games.

In Orlando, Penny Hardaway scored 30 points and Rony Seikaly added 26 points and 14 rebounds as the Magic grabbed a big early lead and cruised to a 114-103 triumph over the Sacramento Kings.

Horace Grant and Dennis Scott added 13 apiece for Orlando, which never trailed after the opening minute and had six players score in double figures.

Mitch Richmond scored 34 points for the Kings, who have lost nine of their last 10 games.

In Toronto, Mark Jackson had 10 points, 11 rebounds and 12 assists for his fourth triple-double of the season as the Indiana Pacers beat the Raptors 98-84.

Rik Smits had 28 points and 12 rebounds and Reggie Miller added 24 points for the Pacers.

Wait Williams had 16

points and Marcus Camby

15 for the Raptors, who

missed 60 shots, going 30-

of-90 from the field.

Indiana moved within 4

1/2 games of Cleveland,

which holds the eighth and

final playoff spot in the

Eastern Conference.

In Phoenix, Kevin Johnson scored 28 points and Wesley Person added 19 to lead the Suns to a 117-112 triumph over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Johnson scored 19 of his points in the second half for the Suns, who won for the ninth time in 12 games.

Ray Allen scored a career-high 32 points for the Bucks.

At Golden State, Gary Payton scored 23 points and Shawn Kemp added 21 as the Seattle SuperSonics posted their largest point total of the season in crushing the Warriors 126-89.

Hersey Hawkins had 17 points for the Sonics, who led by 34 at halftime and have won seven of their last nine games.

Joe Smith led Golden State with 18 points.

In Los Angeles, Malik Sealy's three-pointer with 14 seconds remaining in regulation sent the game into overtime and the Clippers scored the first seven points of overtime en route to a 110-104 victory over the Vancouver Grizzlies.

Lorenzen Wright had a career-high 24 points and Rodney Rogers added 23 for the Clippers, who held onto the seventh spot in the west playoff chase.

Anthony Peeler scored 30 points for the league-worst Grizzlies, losers of 17 of their last 18 games.

1st 'Inter Schoololympics' open Friday

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein Friday opens the Kingdom's first privately organised Little League Championship in swimming, football and basketball which will continue until May 16.

Grouping 12 private schools, the Modern Montessori Inter Schoololympics will bring together over 600 children ages 6-14. The championship will be supervised by over 70 parent volunteers and will have professional referees brought in from respective sports federations.

Referees in the soccer championship are Ismail Hafi and Salem Mahmoud. Basketball referees are Ismail Harb and Hisham Natsheh and Swimming referees Maher Mahfouth, Adel Butarsh, Osama Al Asmar, Mohammad Al Horani and Raja' Abu Qamar.

Tareq Zuhri, physical-education coach at the Modern Montessori School (MMS) came up with the idea two months ago and proceeded to co-ordinate with headmistress Mrs. Randa Al Hasan until the idea came into being.

Mr. Zuhri explained that the three competitions will have four rounds each so that all the participating children get a chance for as much exposure as possible.

"Sports start at an early age at Montessori, at first year kindergarten to be exact," said Mr. Zuhri. "The idea behind the Little League Championship was to expose our students to true sportsmanship and what it means to compete by allowing as many school children as possible from the different schools to participate."

In this Little League, Mr. Zuhri said teams are formed by taking one student from each grade so as to ensure fair play, whereas in the past some schools would send tenth graders to oppose sixth graders.

The sports committee at Montessori was taken very seriously, and got sponsorship from McDonalds, Nestle, Characters, Alpha sports (Diadora and FILA) and Coca Cola.

The swimming championship includes many events up of three categories, with the following schools participating: Al Mashreq, Al Ahlia Girl's School, Modern American School, Amman Academy, Montessori Modern School.

The soccer and basketball championships have been divided into the girl's and boy's separate leagues.

The Leagues

Boy's soccer league

Al Ma'aref School
Al Manhal
Al Mashreq
Terra Sancta
The Modern American School
Amman Academy
Montessori Modern School
Baccalanreath School
The New English School
Al Raed Al Arabi School

Girl's basketball league

Al Ahlia School for Girls
Amman Academy
The New English School
Al Raed Al Arabi
Modern American Schools
Modern Montessori School
Al Watania School

Boy's basketball league

Terra Sancta
Modern American School
Amman Academy
The New English School
Al Raed Al Arabi
Al Manhal
Al Mashreq
Montessori Modern School

Henman out of Davis Cup tie

LONDON (AFP) — Tim Henman, the rising star of British tennis, has pulled out of great Britain's Davis Cup team for next week's tie against Zimbabwe after undergoing surgery on his elbow.

Henman had an operation on Tuesday night at St. John and St. Elizabeth Hospital in London to remove small pieces of bone from his elbow joint.

The 22-year-old, who recently won the ATP's most improved player award for 1996, is expected to start training in about six weeks in preparation for the French Open.

"After consultation with British doctors, who confirmed the opinion of doctors in America that an operation was needed, I decided to go with it straight away," said Henman.

He will be replaced by Jamie Delgado, who joins Greg Rusedski, Andrew Richardson, Neil Broad and Mark Petchey in Britain's team for the Euro/African Zone Group One second round tie at Crystal Palace.

Britain's Davis Cup captain, David Lloyd, was positive about his side's chances despite Henman's absence.

"It is a blow when any team loses a player of Tim's calibre and I was very sorry when he called to tell me the news," he said.

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	Kevin Bacon, Robert Deniro, Dustin Hoffman, Jason Patrick & Brad Pitt... in	Ethan Hawke & Julie Delpy.... in	Adel Imam, Shireen & Saeed Saleh Bakhit Wa Adilah (2) Al Jardal Walkankah	MADONNA & ANTONIO BANDERAS...IN EVITA (new print)	Aman.. Ya Ho The theatre is closed every Saturday & Sunday For reservations call 625155
	SLEEPERS Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	BEFORE SUNRISE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30	

Rain postpones Group 4 Davis Cup matches Jordan plays Tajikistan, Oman today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S opening matches in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group 4 were postponed Wednesday because of heavy rain in the Omani capital, Muscat.

Jordan was due to play Tajikistan in their first encounter of the six-team group but will now have a tough schedule since they will play Tajikistan Thursday morning and Oman in the evening.

The March 26-30 qualifiers group Syria, Tajikistan, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Brunei and Jordan with only the top two teams of the six-team group promoted to Group 3.

The Kingdom's team left for Muscat Monday with team captain Talal Maher expressing hope that the team would be able to score better results and be promoted to Group 3.

Jordan had been relegated to Group 4 in 1995 and failed to be promoted last year after playing in groups 2 and 3 previously.

Countries participating in the annual team tournament are classified into five groups with the world's top teams playing in the prestigious World Group. The other countries are divided into four regional groups.

Representing Jordan are Tharwat Qaisi, Ahmad Hadid, Ghassan Qadi and Faris Azzouni.

The team has been training under the supervision of head coach Kathem Hussein, formerly Iraq's top ranked player.

"I think we have a better chance this year. We concentrated on physical fitness, which had been a weak point in previous years," Mr. Maher had told the Jordan Times prior to departure.

The Davis Cup competition is played on a round-robin format with two singles and one doubles match for each team daily.

The Davis Cup Groups 4 schedule is as follows:

Postponed	Jordan vs. Tajikistan Oman vs. Brunei Syria vs. UAE
Thurs. 27/3	Syria vs. Tajikistan UAE vs. Brunei Oman vs. Jordan
Fri. 28/3	Tajikistan vs. Oman Syria vs. Brunei UAE vs. Jordan
Sat. 29/3	Tajikistan vs. UAE Oman vs. Syria Brunei vs. Jordan
Sun 30/3	Tajikistan vs. Brunei Oman vs. UAE Jordan vs. Syria



Fourth seed Monica Seles of the United States backhands a shot from seventh seed Irina Spirela of Romania during their quarter final match at the Lipton Championships. Seles defeated Spirela 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 (Reuters photo)

'Rusty' Seles advances to semis

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AFP) — Monica Seles withstood a four-day, four-match endurance test to reach the WTA Lipton Championships semi-finals but has yet to find satisfaction after a four-month lay-off.

Former World No. 1 Seles rallied to beat seventh seed Irina Spirela 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, here Tuesday, advancing to a semi-final Thursday against a player she has never faced. 11th-seeded Barbara Paulus of Austria.

Paulus took advantage of 31 unforced errors by France's Sandrine Testud and won 13 or 20 second-serve points to dispatch her 6-3, 6-3 in 76 minutes.

Testud had topped second-seeded Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario on Monday.

Fourth seed Seles, hampered last year by a shoulder injury, is making her 1997 debut after suffering a broken right ring finger last December. She has felt no physical problems in her return at the \$1.75 million event.

"I'm pretty rusty," Seles said. "I have trouble closing out some games. The only way I will get out of that is playing more matches."

The way I played, I need work. I would hit some nice shots and then come apart.

"Unless I am playing a lot of tennis, I still don't feel I have that confidence I need."

Spirela could tell. She said Seles would be no match for 16-year-old Swiss prodigy Martina Hingis if they should meet in Saturday's final. Hingis beat Seles 6-2, 6-0 at the Oakland final last November.

"Martina is very confident now and she is playing better than everybody else now," Spirela said. "She has the game to beat Monica."

Hingis plays American Mary Joe Fernandez in a

Wednesday quarter-final. No matter how Hingis fares, she will replace injured Steffi Graf atop the next WTA rankings Monday.

Ninth-ranked Spirela, Romania's first top-10 woman since 1981, had never won a set from Seles in three prior meetings, all last year on carpet.

But she broke the Yugoslavian-born star in the fourth and sixth games of the match. Seles had two break points in the ninth game but squandered them on errant backhands and then hit another wide to drop the first set.

Spirela broke Seles to open the second set, but she broke back in the next game, again in the sixth and took the eighth with the help of two Spirela double faults.

"I had problems with my

serve all day," Spirela said. "I missed close to the line. I didn't play so bad. It was a close match. She won three games I should have won."

Seles subdued Spirela on her fifth break-point opportunity in game two and moved ahead 4-1. Seles double faulted away a break in the seventh game but broke back in the next game and held for the victory.

Seles has also been distracted because Karolj Seles, her father and coach, has stomach cancer.

"It's really hard. He is such a key part of my life," Seles said. "I want to be with him. He told me I have to do what I love to do. I hope he will be able to come to some tournaments after he starts feeling better."

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Sydney loses 3rd Olympic chief executive

SYDNEY (AFP) — Mal Hemmerling quit Wednesday as chief executive of the 2000 Sydney Olympics organising committee, the third occupant of the post to resign in less than three and a half years.

"Mal Hemmerling has tendered his resignation to pursue other career interests," a spokesman for the Sydney Organising Committee for the 2000 Olympic games (SOCOG) said.

The 15-member SOCOG board is to meet Thursday and Hemmerling was to issue a statement then, the spokesman said.

The resignation was the second blow this week for the Sydney Games. A public share offer to raise money for the Olympic stadium has reportedly proved a flop.

A public offer for 34,400 gold memberships guaranteeing Olympic tickets and giving other special rights closes Thursday and reports have said at least two thirds of the \$A10,000 (\$48,000) memberships remain unsold.

SOCOG's first chief executive, Gary Pemberton, was appointed in November 1993 but stood down in August 1995, while temporarily retaining the organising committee presidency.

Top business executive John Liffie eventually replaced Pemberton as president but he quit in September after only six months.

Speculation about Hemmerling's future as chief executive emerged soon after Michael Knight — the New South Wales state government Olympics minister — was appointed SOCOG supreme in Liffie's place.

Before joining SOCOG, Hemmerling ran the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix in Adelaide for 10 years.

SOCOG was formed to organise the games, leaving construction of facilities mainly to the state government or as Knight has put it, "the government is building the theatre, SOCOG is putting on the show."

A TV channel reported that former federal

government official Sandy Hollway, appointed in December as one of Hemmerling's two deputies, would take up the chief executive's position.

SOCOG board member and New South Wales national party leader Ian Armstrong said he would speak vehemently against any move to remove Hemmerling.

He noted the reports about Hollway and raised concerns about his Labour Party background.

Hollway was a deputy secretary in the cabinet department of former Prime Minister Paul Keating.

"It raises concerns about the possible politicisation by Mr. Knight and New South Wales Premier Bob Carr of the Olympic process," Armstrong said.

New South Wales is run by a Labour government.

Courier reaches European-dominated quarters

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (R) — Former World No. 1 Jim Courier Tuesday joined current No. 1 Pete Sampras in the Lipton Championships quarter-final round, which took on a decidedly European flavour, save for the two American stars.

The top-seeded Sampras rolled on with a 56-minute, 6-2, 6-0 annihilation of Magnus Larsson, giving the Swede plenty of time to go out and celebrate his 27th birthday.

"I really played unbelievable tennis for the most part," said a very satisfied Sampras. "I served well, got off to a good start. It was a smooth day, a real good day."

In the night match, local favourite Courier ousted fifth-seeded Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands 7-6 (8-6) 6-4.

"Any time you get by a guy who's got a Grand Slam title under his belt, that's a great day at the office," said Courier.

The other six quarter-final slots up for grabs went to Europeans, including fourth-seeded Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, who advanced with a 6-4, 6-4

victory over promising Slovakian Dominik Hrbaty. Ivanisevic, a two-time Wimbledon runner-up and a finalist here last year, meets the resurgent Courier in the round of eight.

Australian Open champion Sampras, in the hunt for his fourth title of the year, next meets German Hendrik Dreekman, who ousted Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom 6-3, 6-4.

Nicklas Kulti, another of the four Swedes to reach the fourth round, got no further after being stopped by Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

But Jonas Bjorkman kept Swedish hopes alive by fending off missile-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis 6-3, 6-4.

Bjorkman next faces second-seeded Austrian Thomas Muster, who swiftly downed Spain's Alex Corretja 6-4, 6-4.

Former two-time French Open winner Sergi Bruguera of Spain, who upset third seed Michael Chang in the third round, will face Medvedev in the quarter-finals. Bruguera beat Argentine qualifier Gaston Etlis 7-6 (7-0) 6-4 to take his place in the final

eight.

The 26th-ranked Courier, who has a home nearby and the crowd in his back pocket, Tuesday showed some of the form that brought him the top ranking and four Grand Slam titles earlier in the decade.

Courier mixed a strong baseline attack with the occasional serve and volley to keep fifth seed Krajicek at bay.

The Dutchman, playing only his fourth tournament since knee surgery in December, was erratic on the forehand side and Courier took advantage of the mistakes.

The American failed on two chances to break Krajicek in the eighth game of the first set, but succeeded in the tight 8-6 tiebreaker, capitalising on a forehand error by the Wimbledon champion.

The second set was as hard fought as the first, with Courier gaining the first break for a 2-1 lead.

Courier survived break points in the next game with two service winners and an ace, then held onto the lead, dropping just two more points on serve to reach 5-4.

The local favourite completed his victory in the next



Richard Krajicek

game with a forehand winner down the line.

"It was very satisfying to beat a top player," Courier

said. "It's a little pat on the back that all the work you've been doing is not for nothing."

Sport of kings booms in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Times are changing for the better in the horse racing industry in Japan.

With a 1995 betting turnover of \$36 billion, over 85 per cent of it off-course, and slight growth even during a declining economy, the sport of kings has now become the pleasure of the masses as over 26 million racegoers find a horse to cheer each year.

Racing officials forecast the sport's popularity can only grow further as new types of racegoers emerge

and the quality of racing improves to world class.

Horse racing in modern Japan has gone through three phases.

During the years before World War II, racing was viewed as an elite sport with royalty and rich landowners and business people the main patrons. For decades after the war, racetracks became a gambling haunt for gangsters and the newly rich.

As the 21st century approaches, the sport has evolved into good, clean Japanese family-style fun.

Shuji Inada, general manager of the Japan Association for International Horse Racing (JAIR), feels the sport has finally come of age.

"The courses have received heavy investment and their facilities have been upgraded to the best in the world," he said. "Racing has become much more than gambling. It is now leisure entertainment — a place to take your wife and kids out for the day."

Horse racing is saddled with two authorities, the Japan Racing Association (JRA) which administers major tracks and the National Association of Racing (NAR), controlled by local governments, for regional racing.

At the popular provincial racecourses, attendance is high, almost on level with JIR, but betting is relatively low, under 20 per cent of JAIR's take and most of it bet at the track.

Pressure from international racing organisations is steadily pushing the sport to open more to competition from foreign horses, owners, trainers and jockeys.

The Japan Cup is firmly on the international scene as one of the sport's top races, although the World Cup in Dubai, being run next Saturday, is now the richest race in the calendar.

The relatively low price and quality of foreign race-

horses are also causing big problems for Japanese breeders.

With the weakening of the Yen and the best bloodlines of Europe, the United States, and Australia up for sale, "made in Japan" horses do not sell well.

With purchases such as Sunday Silence (Kentucky Derby winner) and various high class performers from Europe, some of the world's top racing blood now stands at stud in Japan.

"Japanese breeders must be able to recall such wonderful stock back to the U.S. And Europe in order to improve world bloodlines," Ogawa said.

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A man inspects his car damaged during a strong earthquake which rocked Lebanon on Wednesday. The earthquake which rocked Israel too, registered 5.5 on the Richter scale and caused slight damage but no known casualties (AFP photo)

Peled claims Arafat involved in NY blast

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli minister has accused Palestinian President Yasser Arafat of taking part in discussions which led to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York which killed six people.

Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled claimed in remarks published Wednesday in the Jerusalem Post that Israeli intelligence had evidence Mr. Arafat had prior knowledge of the Feb. 26 bombing, for which militants have been convicted.

"More than that, he was part of the discussions on the operation," he said, alleging that Mr. Arafat met several days before the bombing with Sudanese and other militants who hatched the plot.

"I call on the prime minister to give the information to the Americans so they'll know who they're dealing with," said Mr. Peled, a member of the far-right Tsomet Party.

David Bar-Ilan, a close policy adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said "I don't know anything about it," when asked about Mr. Peled's allegations. A Defence Ministry spokesman refused to comment.

But the Jerusalem Post quoted U.S. counter-terrorism officials as dismissing the accusations and charges by Mr. Peled that members of Arafat's Fateh movement continue to receive military training in Sudan, which is on the U.S. State Department's list of "terrorist" sponsors.

Mr. Peled's allegations followed charges by Mr. Netanyahu that Mr. Arafat gave a "green light" to militants to carry out attacks in Israel prior to a suicide bombing Friday in Tel Aviv which killed three Israelis and wounded more than 40.

No group has formally claimed responsibility for the bombing although an anonymous caller to an Israeli television network said it was carried out by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in retaliation for the start earlier this month of work on a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

U.S. officials have discounted the Israeli claim that Mr. Arafat approved the bombing or other attacks inside Israel.

16 'pro-Iran' militants sentenced to prison by Bahrain security court

MANAMA (AFP) — Sixteen Shi'ite Muslims accused of trying to overthrow the Bahraini government with the backing of Iran were jailed for up to 15 years here Wednesday, officials said.

The 16 Bahrainis, accused of belonging to an Iranian-backed group called Hizbollah-Bahrain, were found guilty of "plotting and contacts with a foreign state to overthrow the Bahraini regime."

Eleven other defendants were acquitted by the state security court in Manama, whose verdicts cannot be appealed.

The alleged coup plotters had faced the death penalty, lawyers said. Instead, the heaviest punishment was imposed against Ahmad Kazem Abd Ali Al Mutqawi, with 15 years in jail and a fine of 7,000 dinars (around \$19,000).

Jassem Hassan Mansur Al Khayati was jailed for 12 years with a 5,000-dinar (\$14,000) fine. Two others were sentenced to eight years in jail, one to seven years, eight to five years and three to three years.

Bahrain has been rocked by unrest since December 1994 in which at least 26 people have died.

The trouble is spearheaded by Shi'ite Muslims demanding the restoration of the parliament which the Sunni Muslim-led authorities suspended in 1975.

Last June, Manama accused Tehran of financing and training Shi'ite Muslim militants in a bid to topple the Bahraini government.

Iran denied the accusation. But Bahrain expelled an Iranian diplomat last year, drawing a similar retaliatory move from Tehran.

Amnesty International appealed to the government earlier this month to scrap the trial of the alleged coup plotters, claiming it was "unfair," but Manama dismissed the rights group's concerns.

Dozens of dissidents have already been convicted and sentenced to stiff jail terms by the state security court. At least one Bahraini, found guilty of killing a policeman, was executed last year.

5 schoolgirls killed in northern Algeria

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Five schoolgirls were murdered in a village just south of Algiers, the daily Al Watan reported Wednesday.

The killings took place Sunday and the five were buried Monday, the newspaper said. It gave no further details of the murders, which took place in the Medea region, scene of many bloody massacres in the last five months which have officially been blamed on armed militants.

Last week, militants killed 39 people, mostly women, by slitting their throats or hacking them to death in two attacks carried out in broad daylight in the villages of Ouled Antar and Ouzra, south of Algiers, according to the press.

In addition, two people were killed and two injured in a bomb explosion Tuesday at Errais, near Sidi-Moussa, 30 kilometres southeast of Algiers, the daily Liberte reported.

The bomb blew up in a house and targeted a family that had fled the area but returned to finish moving their belongings. The newspaper said that two members of the same family had previously been murdered.

The Tuesday attack was the second this year targeting the house of an unnamed member of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), one of several guerrilla factions fighting the Algerian government. Liberte said.

It blamed a rival guerrilla faction for the attacks.

The AIS and its Armed Islamic Group are locked in a turf war in which hundreds of guerrillas have been reportedly killed in the past three years.

The latest deaths come as the country is gearing up for June 5 parliamentary elections in which hardline Islamists are barred from fielding candidates.

Algeria has been without a parliament since 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front took a commanding lead. About 50,000 people have died in the five years of violence.

Death sentence upheld

Algeria's high court upheld the death sentence against a former security forces officer who was found guilty of killing President Mohammed Boudiaf in 1992, lawyers said on Wednesday.

"The high court rejected the defence appeal seeking a retrial of the defendant," one of the lawyers said. The lawyers appealed to the high court in the hope to win a retrial arguing their defendant did not get a fair trial.

PFLP denies Habash quit

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) denied on Wednesday a report carried by Al Ra'i daily that PFLP Secretary General George Habash had resigned for health reasons.

"The report is groundless and that Dr. Habash enjoys very good health and is pursuing his responsibilities at the front's leadership," the PFLP said in a statement.

The Al Ra'i report quoted an unidentified PFLP source as saying that Dr. Habash has tendered his resignation as leader of the front for health reasons but that the official announcement of his resignation has been put off until the PFLP's sixth conference due in Damascus in two months.

Uday Saddam Hussein to undergo surgery this week — French sources

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, seriously wounded in an assassination bid in December, will undergo a delicate operation this week, French sources said Wednesday.

"A team of French doctors has arrived for the operation. It will take place in the next few days, at the end of the week," a French source told AFP on condition he not be named.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Iraqi authorities, but Uday, 33, told the U.S. television network CNN on March 7 that French and Iraqi doctors would soon operate on his left leg.

Guns were lobbed a grenade and pumped 14 bullets into Uday when they ambushed his car on Dec. 12 while he drove through the upscale Mansour neighborhood of Baghdad.

He accused Iran of carrying out the attack, but Tehran denied the charge. Sources have said earlier that doctors hesitated to remove bullets lodged near Uday's spine because the operation could prove fatal if it failed.

Uday, a tall, athletic man who sports a beard, dismissed speculation that his legs might be paralysed. Doctors rushed from France to care for Uday, who runs Babel newspaper and Youth television. Shortly after the attack and they have been rotating in and out of Baghdad since December, diplomats said.

But the French government publicly refused in January to admit Uday for treatment in France, sparking a row with Baghdad.

The French source said Uday's condition was "bad," but did not elaborate. Uday, who told CNN he hoped to resume sports after a final operation, has appeared frequently on Iraqi television greeting officials, religious leaders and foreign delegations at Ben Sina hospital in Baghdad.

Uday also heads Iraq's Olympic Committee and soccer federation and runs the Al Baath Al Riyady sports daily.

The last time Uday appeared on his own Youth television was on Friday when he received a group of Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim clerics, telling them: "Sorry, I cannot get up to welcome you because of my leg."

Uday, wearing a traditional headress and robe, was seen for the first time sitting in a chair while the clerics presented him with a green Islamic banner embroidered with Koranic verses.

In the weeks after the attack he was filmed in his hospital bed but around a month later began appearing in a wheelchair.

The Iraqi authorities have said they are continuing the investigation into the attack and have announced no arrests.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sabha has asked the United Nations for help in extraditing assassins suspected to have fled to Iran.

The Iranian-backed Iraqi opposition group, the Shiite Al Daawa Islamiya, claimed responsibility for the attack from its offices in Beirut.

General Wafiq Samarra, a former Iraqi intelligence chief who defected to Syria in 1994, said dissident members of the ruling baath party may have staged the ambush.

Other sources have mentioned a possible settling of scores within the ruling family.

Diplomats in Baghdad said the attack, although a major breach of President Saddam's formidable security forces, is not necessarily an indication that the government has become vulnerable after six years of U.N. sanctions.

"There is no sign that the regime is more in danger now than before," a diplomat said.

Yemen tightens security in Aden ahead of polls

ADEN (AP) — The government has sent troops and tanks into Aden after the opposition Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) decided to boycott next month's elections, party activists said Tuesday.

Army and security forces have also arrested party members in the city, which is the party's stronghold, said the activists, who spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

They did not give details, but the deployment reflected the tension that has surfaced in the weeks before the elections.

The YSP, which for years ruled the

south of the country before it was united in 1990, decided earlier this month to boycott the parliamentary elections set for April 27.

The arrests were apparently made in response to the party's efforts to rally the support of other southern opposition groups in boycotting the elections. Aden, a port on the Arabian sea, was the former capital of the south.

But Aden's chief security officer, Colonel Mohammad Saleh Al Tariq, said the crackdown only came after his forces discovered weapons and ammunition in houses of party members.

He also accused the YSP of trying to incite trouble ahead of the elections with help from neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which has long sought a role in Yemen.

"The intensity of the military presence is only natural to protect the elections because they will be carried out in a difficult ... situation and despite the interference of some neighbouring countries like Saudi Arabia," he said.

The YSP led the south's attempt to secede in 1994 that began a two-month civil war. The party is cooperating with a Saudi-backed opposition group based in London.

Abu Diya did not fit profile of typical suicide bomber

ZURIF (AP) — Musa Abu Diya led a double life.

As a waiter for 10 years in Tel Aviv, the 28-year-old Palestinian was comfortable around Israelis, blending easily into the city's secular, western lifestyle, and never showing any interest in politics, even during the worst days of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians.

Then on Friday, he walked into a downtown cafe and blew himself up.

Israelis who knew him were incredulous.

"I knew him as a human being," said Yacov Sultan, who worked in restaurants with Abu Diya and had known him for seven years.

"He was the kind of man you could sit down with after a shift, eat dinner with from the same plate, share personal stories, smoke cigarettes with and talk into the wee hours of the night."

Relatives and friends recalled a different Abu Diya: a man who long sought to kill Jews to avenge Israel's occupation of his homeland.

In a pilgrimage last year to Mecca, "he prayed to fall martyr for Palestine," said Ghaleb Ensour, a relative by marriage.

In his village of Zurif, Abu

Diya was described as a devout but quiet man who desperately tried to provide for his four children.

"Economically, the family is not so well," said Sharif Hassan, another relative through marriage. "All the money they make goes to keep food on the table."

Israeli experts had cast young, single Palestinians as the "typical suicide bomber," and during times of tension only older, married men were allowed into Israel to work.

Abu Diya broke the mold. "With terrorism you must think of the unexpected. It is a mistake to look (only) at single men in their 20s," said Yona Alexander, director of the Inter-University for Terrorism Studies in Israel.

"Perhaps he was humiliated to work with the enemy in a low position. He had to serve the enemy to feed his family — asking why Jews get to enjoy the good life while Palestinians live in refugee camps," Ms. Alexander said.

His family may have been his greatest concern, Ms. Alexander said. "As a martyr he is ensured someone will take care of his family financially. His family's future was assured by the Hamas

organisation."

Hamas usually provides generous sustenance for the families of its "martyrs." But there was no evidence yet that this had been arranged in this case, and no traditional videotape of the bomber explaining his motives and saying goodbye to his family publicly.

Abu Diya was last seen in Zurif a week ago, when he took his one-year-old son, Muhammad, for treatment of his asthma in Hebron. "Musa seemed especially worried (and) said, 'only God can cure him,'" Mr. Hassan said.

On Friday, Musa walked into the crowded Apropos

cafe in Tel Aviv, about 100 kilometres from Zurif. He walked around tables and parlours on the patio, clutching his explosives in two bags.

His light skin and dark soft curled hair may have enabled him to pass for an Israeli. But his nervous manner attracted attention.

One waiter noticed him, then saw him blow up with a "tremendous flash of light," turning the cafe patio into a smoldering wreck. The blast killed Abu Diya and three Israeli women and wounded 40.

On Saturday, a night curfew was imposed on Zurif.

Israeli troops barred residents from entering or leaving the village. Twenty villagers, including members of Abu Diya's family, were arrested. The army plans to demolish his house and kept reporters away from his family.

Two of his employers were also arrested for hiring him although he had no valid permit to be in Israel.

Musa was the second of the 11 children of Abdul Qader Abu Diya, 65.

In 1990, he spent 18 days in prison after he was arrested in an Israeli troop sweep through his village. Abu Diya's two brothers were also arrested and charged with throwing stones and belonging to Hamas.

Immediately after high school, Musa went to work in Israel. He came home every two weeks. He would spend his Fridays at the village mosque and talking to village elders. His father and two brothers are construction workers in Israel.

The family as a whole is religious. The women wear Islamic dress and all of the men pray and fast," Mr. Hassan said. "Just because one is observant does not mean they are Hamas bombers."

COLUMN

Arafat pulled gun at Sri Lankan president's home

COLOMBO (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat embarrassed Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga by pulling out a gun during a banquet here in his honour, a guest said Wednesday.

Kumaratunga had just announced to guests at her tightly-guarded Temple Trees residence on Monday that the Palestinian leader no longer carried a weapon.

"But he promptly pulled out a pistol from under his olive green bush coat and showed it to everyone," the guest said adding the action prompted loud laughter. However, Kumaratunga turned the tables on Arafat by introducing a Sri Lankan Tamil legislator Dharmalingam Siddharthan and saying: "He was trained by you, but now he is with me."

Arafat had strongly denied that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) trained Sri Lankan Tamil militants in the mid 1980s. Arafat told reporters here Tuesday that Palestinian groups may have trained Sri Lankans but not his PLO.

However, Siddharthan whose DPLF party supports Kumaratunga's government contradicted the PLO leader. Siddharthan said he spent weeks in Lebanon in 1984 to see members of his former Tamil militant group undergoing training by the PLO.

Japanese couple reunited after 51 years

TOKYO (AFP) — A 78-year-old Japanese man, who was taken to the former Soviet Union as a suspected spy 51 years ago, has at last been reunited with his 80-year-old wife, local media reported Wednesday.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting for me for so long," Yasuhiro Hachitani reportedly told his wife Hisako when he arrived Tuesday in the Kedaka, Tottori prefecture in western Japan. "I'm happy to see you still alive," the tearful Hisako replied as they embraced each other. Hachitani was taken from Pyongyang to a Soviet detention camp in 1946 on suspicion of espionage. He was released in 1953, but was not allowed to leave the country. Kyodo news and other reports said. He had been living in the Russian far eastern region of Amur with his Russian wife, from whom he obtained consent to return to Japan. Kyodo said.

Sexy bikinis banned from Honduran beaches

TEGUCIGALPA (R) — A Honduran provincial governor barred women from wearing sexy G-string bikinis on beaches over Easter so as not to "fire up the passions of men," Eloy Page said sun worshippers found wearing skimpy swimwear on Atlantic coast beaches would be punished but he did not specify what the penalties would be. "Women have no reason to wear these dental floss bikinis because they fire up the passions of men ... above all when they have a few drinks inside them," he told reporters.

FBI finds goldmine in Rhode Island backyard

PROVIDENCE (R) — Federal prosecutors and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) announced they had struck gold in the backyard of a Rhode Island home owned by the relative of a drug convict. Using metal detectors and ground-penetrating radar, agents found 82 bars of gold and seven bags of gold pellets weighing nearly 6,000 troy ounces buried behind a Cranston home. Prosecutors put the value of the cache at about \$2.1 million. The house belongs to a relative of Stephen Saccoccia, who is serving 660 years in federal prison for racketeering and money laundering, prosecutors said.

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